

G R E A T
AND PRECIOUS
P R O M I S E S :

O R,

Some Sermons concerning the Promises, & the right application thereof.

Whereunto are added some other concerning the usefulness of Faith in advancing Sanctification.

As also, three more concerning the Faith of Assurance.

By that pious and faithful servant of JESUS CHRIST, Mr. ANDREW GRAY,
late Minister at GLASGOW.

All being revised since his death by
some friends:

2 COR. 7. 1. *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*



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TO THE READER.

Christian Reader,

Although (upon some considerations) these following Sermons have been kept back till now, and have waited the vacancy of the Press from other things: yet was it at first intended (the connexion of the purposes so requiring) that they should have come forth as soon as some other of this precious Author, which we did formerly publish: And therefore, in the Preface which we then prefixed, we did relate to both, and gave the Reader such advertisements as we conceived necessary concerning the one as well as the other: So that we have nothing to do at present but to put this little Piece into thy hands, commending it to thy serious thoughts, and the Lords blessing upon them. Neither shall we use many words to this purpose; Only, we find some help is offered unto thee, in three most weighty and concerning points of Christian Religion. 1. How by the lively exercise of Faith, thou may apply the great and precious Promises. 2. How by Faith thou may advance the work of Sanctification. And 3. how thy faith may grow up unto assurance. Of all which we may truly say, that nothing can more seasonably take up the thoughts, nor bring more advantage to the souls of the Lords people in these times.

O how necessary is it in such troublesome dayes to

To the Reader.

learn, how through Faith and Patience, we may inherit the Promises: and now when our strong corruption hath (in a manner) necessitate the wise Physician to mix unto us so bitter a cup, and give so strong a potion, in what a fainting and swooning condition must we be, if by the two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we receive not also, the strong consolation.

Again, when prophanity and ungodliness hath so abounded in these Nations, that from the top of the head, to the sole of the foot, there is no soundness, but wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores. And when the corruption of the Time, like the sons of Zerviah, are grown too strong, even for the Davids who are amongst us; What should we study with more earnestness, then to purify our hearts by faith, and by having these promises, to cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord? 3. When the Lord hath removed us so far from peace, that the souls of many have even forgot prosperity; and the multiplied changes, and revolutions in our days hath so clearly demonstrate the instability of all sublunary glory, and so convincingly taught us, that this is not our rest; undoubtedly, it is time to look for a city that hath foundations, and to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure. The subject then is useful.

As to the manner of handling it: It is true, much accuracy and neatness, is not to be expected in any work of this nature, being only the hasty gleanings of a Church-writer. And as to liveliness and power, though

To the Reader.

though it be as easie to draw a picture with the heat and motion of a living man, as to write or print these lively motions of the Spirit which do often accompany the Lords Messengers in preaching, and in an eminent measure, were also let out upon this blessed Author; yet we suppose thou wilt find the matter most seriously and feelingly spoken unto, as from a heart which believed, and therefore spake: Yea, both conceptions and expressions favouring much of an exercised spirit, not only much taken up in communion with God within it self; but even thirsting also, and panting for the Salvation of others: nay, (in some measure) travelling in bisch till Christ might be formed in them. Oh, that more of this holy zeal and fervency, might accompany this great measure of light and knowledge in the mysteries of the Gospel that the Lord hath graciously bestowed both on Pastors and people in this generation, that once again we may see, (as in the days of John the Baptist) the Kingdom of Heaven suffering violence, and the violent taking it by force. And that the blessed spirit by the same gracious operations, may so warm and enlarge thy Soul in the use of this and all other means for thy eternal salvation, is, and shall be the sincere desires of

Thy Servants for
Christs sake,

RO. TRAIL.
JO. STERLING.



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GREAT



G R E A T A N D P R E C I O U S P R O M I S E S.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruptions that is in the World through lust.*

MA Y we not truly say, that if ever the Christians who live in these days shal be advanced to stand within the holy place, and shal inherit everlasting life, all these that are now before his Throne, may lay aside their Harps and give us leave to sing? Will it not be a mystery, suppose ye, unto heavenly Enoch that spent so much of his time in communion and fellowship with God, when he shal behold such Christians within that everlasting rest, that have spent so little of their time in corresponding with God? Will it not be a mystery unto believing Abraham, when he shal behold such misbelievers, such disputers of the promises of God, advanced to reign with Christ? Will it not be a mystery unto wrestling Jacob, when he shal behold these Christians once crowned with immortal glory, that did so little know what it was as Prin-

ces to wrestle with God, till they did prevail. Will it not be a wonder to patient *Job*, when he shall behold such impatient Christians, as we have been, entering into that blessed place of repose? Will it not be a mystery unto holy *David*, when he shall behold such unmortified Christians entering within that City, unto which no unclean thing doth enter? Will it not be a mystery unto tender *Josiah*, to behold such Christians as we are, that have our hearts dying as a stone within us, entering into heaven? Will it not be a mystery unto upright *Nathaniel*, to behold such hypocritical Christians, as the most part of us are, entering within the holy place, and to see thole that have been cloathed with hypocrisie and guile, now cloathed with the Robes of immortal Glory? And will it not be a mystery unto self-denied *Paul*, when he shall behold so proud and selfish Christians enter into Heaven? Give me leave to say this, go where we will, we shall be matchless and singular: for if we shall enter into eternity of pain, we shall be the greatest debtors unto the infinite justice of God, in regard of mercies we have received: and if we shall enter into eternity of joy, we shall be the greatest debtors unto the spotless grace of Christ, in regard of mercy we have abused. There shall be none in heaven like to us, and if we shall go to hell, there shall be few there that may be compared unto us. And let me but adde this further before I come to the words, go where we will, we shall be out of doubt with our condition.

Within a short time a real Christian shall be exalted above the reach of his misbelieving, a hypocrite shall be depressed below the reach of his faith; and one that is grossly in nature, he shall be abased beyond the reach of his presumption: a Christian ere long, shall misbelieve no more: a hypocrite ere long, shall believe no more: and one that is grossly in nature, shall ere long presume no more. There is no misbelief in heaven: and there is no faith, nor presumption in well being in hell. But to come to that which we intend to speak to, we told you, when first we began our discourse upon that precious and exalting grace of Faith, that we intended to speak of Faith under a two-fold notion and consideration. First, as it is justifying. And secondly, as it is sanctifying. For the first, we resolved to speak to it in a two-fold consideration. First, as it closeth with Christ simply, as the object upon which it resteth: and of this we have spoken from that place, 1 John 1. 3. 23. Secondly, as it closeth with Christ, as held forth in the promises. And now being to speak of it in this consideration, we have made choice of this place, in which those things concerning the promises, shortly.

1. Ye have that fountain and spring from whence the promises do flow, holden forth in the first words of the verse, *whereby*, or as the words may be more fitly rendered, *by whom*, relating unto Jesus Christ, who is the original & spring of all.

2. The properties of the promises, and these are: 1. The freedom of the promises held forth

in that word *given whereby are given*; which speaketh this, that the promises are free gifts, flowing only from good pleasure. 2. Their unchangeableness, and that is holden forth also in the word *given*; the gifts and calling of God being without repentance. 3. That they are exceeding great, and the promises are called great, either in respect of that price that was laid down to purchase the promises, or they are called great, in respect of the great things that are contained in them. 4. That they are precious. Now the promises are called precious, either in respect of their original, that they come from precious Christ; or else in respect of this, that they are the object (I mean the object *quo*, or *by which*) of precious faith, as it is called in the first verse of this chapter; or else they are precious, because they are things that a Christian ought to put an high account upon. For the word that is rendered precious, may likewise be rendered honorable, whereby are given unto us exceeding great and honorable promises.

3. We have holden forth in the words the great advantage of the promises: *By them we are made partakers of the divine nature*. Now this is not to be understood of any essential conversion of our substance into the substance of God, but of a Christians having the divine virtues of Jesus Christ impressed upon his soul, and expressed in his life and conversation,

And there is this lastly, concerning the promises in the words, even the time when the promises are eminently accomplished; it is, when we

have

have escaped ; or as the word is, when we have fled from the corruptions that are in the world through lust. That is the time when a Christian meeteth with the accomplishment of the promises.

Now before we can speak to any of these , we must speak a little unto some things , as necessary to be known , in order , to the better understanding of all. 1. We shal not dwell long in pointing out unto you what is a promise. We conceive it is a glorious discovery of the good will of God towards sinners ; and withal, a purpose and intendment, and (if we may say) an engagement to bestow some spiritual or temporal good upon them, or to with-hold some spiritual or temporal evil from them. And certain it is, that in this description of the promise, there is a divine harmony betwixt Mercy and Truth , betwixt Righteousness and Peace, they kiss one another. Neither shal we stand long to point out the distinction of the promises. 1. There are some promises that are conditional, & there are some promises that are absolute: absolute promises are these that have no condition annexed unto the performance of them : such a promise is that , that God will destroy the World no more by water ; that is an absolute promise: such a promise was that of Gods sending his Son into the world, that was an absolute promise: and such is that promise of conversion , in giving the heart of flesh, it is an absolute promise. As for the conditional promises , they are these that do require some condition to be performed by the Christian , before the accomplishment of the

promise, such as that promise of salvation, it requireth believing, as going before it: *He that believeth shall be saved.* And pardon, it is promised unto a Christian upon repentance. And yet we confess, that there is not a conditional promise that is in all the covenant of grace, but it may be reduced unto an absolute promise, in regard that the thing promised (in the conditional promise) is one absolute free gift, and the condition of the promise is another. 2. There are some promises that are temporal, and some that are spiritual: temporal promises are these that promise some temporal thing unto a Christian; and spiritual promises are these that promise the bestowing of something that is of everlasting concernment. 3. There are some promises that are not accomplished in this life, such as this, *That we shall see him as he is, and shall be made like unto him.* But as for the promises of Faith and of Justification, these are accomplished in this life. 4. There are some promises that are extraordinary, and there are some promises that are common: extraordinary promises are these that are given to some particular believers, as a singular priviledge; such was that promise that was given to *Abraham*, *That in his seed should all families of the earth be blessed:* and that promise that was given to *Rebekah*, *That the elder should serve the younger.* As for common promises, they are these, that every Believer in Christ hath a right to make use of.

Neither shall we stand long to point out, that it is the duty of a Christian to be much in the

exercise of Faith upon the promises : it is clear from *Psal 61. 8. Trust in him at all times, ye people.* And it is clear from the practise of that precious cloud of witnesses, recorded of in *Hebr. 11.* that spent their dayes in embracing of the promises. But, 7. we would have you consider, that it is more easie for a Christian to believe spiritual promises, then to believe temporal promises : it is easier to trust Christ for eternal salvation, then to trust him for our daily food, when we are redacted unto straits. And the grounds upon which we assert this, may be these. 1. Because it is hard for a Christian to believe that Christs death reacheth for the purchasing of temporal promises, which more easily he taketh up in spiritual promises : for a Christian can hardly believe that such a thing was in Christs intention, as to die for his daily food, which yet is most certain, if we consider it as a special mercy. 2. In a Christians believing of spiritual promises, there is often some sense and reason that helpeth him to the exercise of faith, at least, they press not the contrary : but to believe a temporal promise, when a Christian is redacted unto a strait, and that he can see no out-gate present, sense and reason stands upon the top of his faith, and presseth him to despair. As for instance, when a Christian is living upon the top of a mountain, and knoweth not where to sup at night, to believe that there is a promise upon which he may rest, that he shal not want his food ; but that if the Lord have service for him, he will provide : here he hath not only

reason to dispute against, but the strong pinching sense of hunger, both crying out, how can bread be given in the wilderness? 3. The tentations that assault a Christian to misbelief upon temporal promises, they are more subtile and more connatural to a Christian, then his tentations that assault him in resting upon spiritual promises. When a Christian is in straits in the World, the tentations that kinder his exercise of faith, they are more consonant unto flesh and blood; we are ready to yield to misbelief then, because we think it is rational, and speaketh the truth. 4. A Christian is often so afrighted by his daily failings, or some particular more gross out-breakings in his life, that howbeit he may (through grace) be helped to believe that the Lord shal make out these promises which concern his eternal salvation, and so do him good in the latter end: yet may he be sadly perplexed and distrustful in making use of any particular temporary promise, for drawing forth any comfort or encouragement there from, as to his present exigent: because he knoweth that although the Lord doth forgive his peoples iniquities, yet may he take vengeance on their inventions; *Psalm 99. 8.* and therefore may punish his present failing with the like calamities as he hath done others. 5. There is also much of a natural and carnal self-love to a present life, remaining in the best, that we are many times worse to satisfie in our securities for the things of this life, then of that which is to come, and can more easily trust the Lord for our

souls

souls, then for our bodies; so that though his naked word will sometimes satisfie us for the one, yet it will not for the other. And the last ground of it may be a Christians unacquaintedness with the lot of exercising faith upon temporal promises, there being many who think not that there is use for faith, except for salvation and the things above, which maketh his faith upon these more difficult then upon promises that are spiritual: And this may appear most clearly, in that we find men more easily bear their spiritual wants (even a Christian that is most exercised) then they bear their temporal wants; and more corruption and impatience doth arise from temporal want, then from spiritual want.

2. Consider, that all a Christians duties are turned over into promises: there is not a duty that is required of a Christian, but it is converted into a promise. Is not Faith a duty in 1 Joh. 3. 23. *This is his commandment that ye should believe?* And is not that turned over in a promise, in Jerem. 3. 16. *Thou shalt call me thy Father?* The word importeth not only an act of necessary, but of violence, thou shalt do it, and in the 13. of Zechary, at the close, *Thou shalt call me thy Father.* And so in Ezek. 11. 19. Is not mortification a Christians duty, in Coloss. 3. 5. *Mortifie therefore your members;* and it is turned over in a promise, in Jerem. 32. 28. and Ezek. 36. 29 where he promiseth, that he will purge away all their uncleannesses; and it is most clear from Mic. 7. 19. *I will subdue,* said he, *all thine iniquities:* it is not

laid, thou must subdue them, but I will do it. Is not
 also the knowledge of God a commanded duty?
 and yet it is turned over in a promise in the cove-
 nant of grace, *They shal know me from the highest to
 the lowest, neither shal there be need any more that
 one should say, know the Lord, for they shal be all
 taught of me.* Is not the commandment of fear
 your duty? as is clear from *Eccles. 12. 13.* and yet
 that is likewise turned over in a promise: *I will
 put my fear in their inward parts, and they shal not
 depart away from me:* So tenderneſs is a Christi-
 ans duty: and yet that is turned over in a pro-
 mise, *I will take away their heart of stone, and give
 them an heart of flesh.* And that I may say no more
 of this, look but to these four places, and there ye
 will see almost all duties turned over in promises:
there is Jer. 31. Jer. 32. Ezek. 11 Ezek. 36. ye will
 see all the duties of the covenant converted into
 promises. But may not some say, What advantage
 is there of this? much certainly, every way. That
 the duties are turned over into promises, it may
 give a Christian hope, that he shal once perform
 these duties? will ye not once be tender; yes cer-
 tainly, because your tenderneſs lyeth within a
 promise; will ye not once be much in the exercise
 of fear? no doubt ye will, and the ground of it is
 this, because your fear lyeth within a promise, and
 so of the rest. And 2. there is this advantage of it,
 that all the duties required of a Christian are
 turned over in promises; because by this means a
 Christian may go to God, when he cannot per-
 form such a duty and desire him to fulfill his word
 and

and accomplish his promise : and so may make use not only of the Omniporency of God , but of the faithfulness of God also.

There is this third consideration that we would propose, that there are some things of a Christian within a promise , that he doth not believe to be within it , especially these three. First, the challenges of a Christian are within a promise , when ye are convinced, that is, the accomplishment of a promise, this is clear from *Isai. 30. 21*, where convictions and challenges are turned over into a promise; *When thou art turning to the right hand or to the left , thine ears shal hear a voice behind thee, crying , this is the way , walk in it :* and it may be clear that our convictions are the accomplishment of promises , because it is a work of the Comforter , as well to convince , *John 16. 9.* as it is for him to make one rejoyce. And if a Christian could believe that his challenges were the accomplishment of a promise , he might embrace his challenges, he might see the faithfulness of God in his challenges , and he might see much love in his challenges. 2. A Christians cross is within a promise, so that when a Christian meets with such affliction, he may sit down and cry out, this is the accomplishment of a promise : and this is clear from *Psal. 89. 31. 32.* wherein in the midst of the promises of the covenant of grace, that promise of visiting their iniquities with rods , is put in the bosome of them : and from *Psalme 119. 75.* *In faithfulness hast thou afflicted me.* Why doth David say in faithfulness ? It was this , because his cross was the accomplishment of a promise : and it

may be clear also from that word in Heb. 11. 7. *Forget not the exhortation* (speaking of the cross) the word is, *Forget not the consolation that speaketh unto you*: as if the holy Ghost did say, crosses do yield much consolation, as in verse 11. *They yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness*; and if this were believed, that our crosses were the accomplishment of the promises, it would help a Christian unto much humble submission; and there would not be murmuring under them, if once we did believe that they were the accomplishment of a promise: yea, there is this advantage further, that if we did believe, that our crosses were the accomplishment of a promise, we would be much in advancing holiness under our cross. There is nothing that obstructeth the sweet fruits of righteousness under a cross, so much as impatience. And I would say this to commend the cross, a Christian never moveth so swiftly to heaven, as when he is under a sanctified cross; a cross when it is sanctified, will prove a Christians motions to heaven, more then ten enjoyments, for our enjoyments ordinarily do retard our way as much as further it. And there is this, thirdly, that is within the promises, even your daily food, and the hairs of your head, the hairs of a Christians head are numbered, and within the Covenant. So that ye may see what a high respect Christ hath put upon Christians, that is cleared from that word, Psal. 111. 4. 5. *He hath given meat unto them that fear him, he will ever be mindful of his covenant.*

Our fourth consideration shal be to point out a little those grounds upon which Christ doth

delay his accomplishment of the promises, it is certain that a Christian is often times put to this, *Doth his promise fail for evermore?* and cryeth out, *Why art thou become unto me as a lyar, and as waters that fail?* And the grounds of this delay are these: 1. Christ knoweth that a Christian can often better improve the delay of the accomplishment of the promise, then he can improve the accomplishment it self; we might find this in our experience (it being for the most part) easier for a Christian to bear his crosses, then to bear his enjoyments. I think *David* never had so sweet a time as then, when he was pursued as a Partridge by his son *Absolon*; then grace did breath forth most sweetly, in his actions: but let *David* be under prosperity, and then we see he falleth in the sin of adultery. And therefore never repine when ye are under a cross; for certainly, if we had spiritual understanding, we would not judge it so great a hazard to be under a cross, as under prosperity, since we have greater strength to bear the one, then to endure the other. 2. The sloathfulness of a Christian to whom the promises are made, this maketh the promises to be delayed in their performance, as was clear in the people of *Israel*; they are forty years in a wilderness, before that promise of entering into *Canaan* is accomplished. It was a promise that could have been accomplished in a few days, and yet because of their sin, it was not accomplished for forty years, as ye may see from that word in *Numb.* 14. 33. 34. 3. The accomplishment of the promises is delayed, that faith may be more put in exercise: this is clear

from that remarkable word in *Psalms* 105. 19. *Untill the time that his word came*; that is, untill the word of the Lord was accomplished; *The word of the Lord did try him*; that is, it was the matter of his exercise, an exercise especially unto faith; for indeed it is much for a Christian to believe upon a word, when it is delayed in its accomplishment. The fourth ground of delay is, that the exercise of prayer may be more; and it is certain, that the best improvement of delays is, to be much in prayer: the promises they do occasion prayer, as is cleared from *Exod.* 4. last, *They believed, and bowed down their heads and worshipped*: and from *2 Sam.* 7. 27. where the great promises being made to *David*, he cryeth out, *Therefore have I found in my heart to pray this prayer unto God*: and it is clear from *Psalms* 119. 49. *Perform thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope*. It is a bad improvement of delays, when we turn impatient: and it is a bad improvement of delays, when we quite our confidence. Know that promises are accomplished after delays, and they have a luster upon them that they may compensate all the delay. 5. There is this other ground of the delays of accomplishment of the promises, even that the thing that is promised may be more sweet to a Christian when it cometh. This is clear from that word of *Solomon*, *Prov.* 12. 13. *Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, but when the desire doth come, it is a tree of life*. O but a mercy that cometh to a Christian through a promise, it is sweet, yea, a drink of cold water taken up as the accomplishment of a promise, is

more sweet then a feast of fat things full of marrow, and wine on the lees well refined. To take up your bread and your drink as the accomplishment of your promises, it would make them refreshful to you. 6. The Lord delays his promises, that a Christian may be more in the exercise of dependency, and may be alwayes kept about the Throne. A Christian goeth to God from a three-fold principle, he goeth to God from a principle of Faith, from a principle of necessity, and from a principle of love: but would you know that which putteth the Christian osteneft to God? It is a principle of necessity: And believe it, that if necessity did not drive a Christian unto the foot of the Throne, we would seldom go from a principle of love, or from a principle of Faith. And there is this last ground of the delay of the accomplishment of the promises, that the glory of the wisdom of God may appear, and the glory of his power in the accomplishment of the promise. When the promise is long beneath ground, then the wisdom and power of God doth more appear in the accomplishment of that promise. And from this I would only say to Christians that are under that exercise, complaining of the want of performance of promises: these few things. 1. Believe that the promise shal once be accomplished, that though the vision tarry, yet at last it shall speak. 2. Believe that every hours delay of the accomplishment of the promise hath a sweet design of love: There is not one moment of delay, but it is for the advantage of a Christian, as is clear from that word, Rom. 8. 28. And 3. that promise that

cometh after long delays it hath these three sweet and soul-refreshing attendants. 1. It is performed most seasonably, a Christian if he will observe he will see infinite wisdom shining in timing the accomplishment of the promise to such a particular day. A Christian will be constrained to cry out, if the promise had been fulfilled before, there had not been such art of wisdom appearing in the performance of it. 2. That the promise when it is accomplished, will engage a Christian more in the exercise of love, then four promises accomplished at a short and smaller time. There is nothing that will so inflame the soul with love, as to have a promise accomplished after delays. And 3. the promises accomplished after delays, have much sense waiting upon the performance thereof. I think hardly a Christian ever met with the accomplishment of a promise after long delay, but his soul was made as a watered garden, & as springs of water whose waters fail not: this promise fails, and comes to a Christian perfumed with love.

Now we shall shut up our discourse at this time, and shal only speak to those six defects of a Christians faith in believing the promises. 1. That our faith is impatient, we cannot stay upon the promise if it be delayed. Hence ye will see that in Scripture often patience is annexed to faith, which speaketh this, That it is impossible for a Christian to believe as he ought, that wanteth the exercise of patience. See Hebr. 6. 12. Be ye followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promise: and that word in the Revelation, This is the faith and patience of the saints.

2. Our faith in closing with the promises, it is most unconstant. A Christian when first a promise is born in upon his spirit, he will then believe the promise and joya with it: but after six or seven dayes go about, he will change his Faith, this is remarkably clear from *Exod. 4. 31.* compared with *Exod. 6. 9.* when first the promise cometh to the people of Israel, that they shall go out of Egypt, it is said of them in the fourth Chapter at the close, *They believed the promise, and worshipped:* But look to them in *Exod. 6. 9.* and the eye will see them not believing, because of *bitterness and anxiety of heart.* And I will tell you the grounds why our Faith is unconstant. 1. Sometimes the reading of a promise to a Christian will be as the savory meat: Sometimes when a Christian will read one time in the covenant, it will be perfumed with love, and his soul will be transported with joy after it, and at another time, when he shall read that promise again, it will be *tasteless as the white of an egge,* and *as his sorrowful meat.* 2. That we are not much in studying the exercise of the things that are promised, which certainly would cut short many of our debates. There is this third defect of faith, that we are not diligent: a diligent faith we call this, that after a Christian hath believed, he would be much in the exercise of prayer for the accomplishment of the promise, he would be much in the exercise of meditation, to make that promise lively and sweet to him. And a fourth defect is this, we build our Faith more upon dispensations then upon the word. When dispensations say that which the promise

faith.

saith, then we will believe, but when dispensation speaketh the contrary language unto the promise, then we will reject our confidence and hope. I will tell you two great mysteries of believing, 1. It is hard for a Christian to believe when the commentary seemeth to destroy the Text: that is when the commentary seemeth to declare that the promise shal never be accomplished. In sum it is this, It is hard to believe when dispensation will say, the word of the Lord will fail, and when promises bids you believe. 2. It is hard for a Christian to take impossibilities in the one hand, and the word of promise in the other, and say, O precious Christ, reconcile these two together, that impossibilities do not destroy the promise, but that the promise may be accomplished notwithstanding of these. 3. We have this defect of faith amongst us, that we build our faith more upon sense, then upon the word of promise: when a Christian is in a good frame, he will believe, but when Christ hideth his face, he will then give over his hope. And lastly, there is this, that our faith upon the promises is general, we believe the truth of the promises: but we study not to make a particular application of them. I shal not stand long to make any use of what we have spoken: only I would have the Christians of this age, and those that are here, to go home with this conviction, the damnable neglect of believing of the promises. A Christian neglecteth these three duties of Religion most, he neglecteth the duty of self-examining, the duty of believing the promises, and the noble soul-exalting duty of meditation.

ration: these three duties a Christian doth so constantly neglect, that almost he is above the reach of conviction, that he doth neglect them.

But I would say a word unto those that are destitute of the faith of the promises, and are strangers unto these blessed things that are recorded within the covenant. And it is only this, doubtless ye will believe your senses, if ye will not believe his word. It is a question indeed, which of all the senses shall be most satisfied in heaven, whether that of seeing, when we shall behold the King in his beauty, and see him as he is? Or that of hearing, when we shall hear these melodious Hallelujahs of that innumerable company, which are about the Throne, without any jarring amongst them all? O that of smelling, when we shall find the sweet perfume of his garments, which are perfumed with all the powders of the Merchants? Or that of touching, when we shall find *Maries* inkhibition taken off; Touch me not, and be admitted to embrace him who is now ascended to his Father? Or that of tasting, when we shall drink of these rivers of consolation, that shall never run dry? This I say is indeed a question, but give me leave to tell you, O Atheists, and enemies to God: It is also a question, which of all the five senses of a reprobate shall be most tormented in Hell, and what would you answer to it now? Whither think ye the sense of sight, when ye shall behold that darkness of wrath, the Devil and his angels, and your fellow prisoners in that dungeon? Or whether shall your sense of hearing be most tormented in Hell,

Hell, when ye shall hear those screechings and howlings that shall eternally ascend up before God by the souls that are in prison? O but the greatest enemy would have compassion upon his enemy, to hear their cries. Or, whether will ye say the sense of tasting shall be most tormented, when ye shall drink of these *rivers of brimstone*? Or will the sense of touching, when ye shall be eternally scorched with these flames of eternal indignation? Or the sense of smelling, when ye shall eternally be, as it were, suffocated with the smoke of that sulphurous furnace that shall never be quenched? O think you if *Cain* would come from Hell and preach that Doctrine, that we should not persecute the Saints, would we listen unto him? If *Absalon* should come from Hell and should preach against the evil of ambition, would we listen unto him? And if *Achitophel* should rise from the dead & preach that Doctrine unto you, *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom*, would we stop our ear? Or if *Judas* would come from Hell and preach the evil of hypocrisy in betraying the Son of man with a kiss, would we believe him? O if *Dives* that is recorded in the Gospel, should come from Hell, and choose that Text to preach upon, in *James 5. 1. Go ye rich men and howl, and weep for your misery that shall come upon you*. And if *Demas* would come & second him with that word, *Love not the world, nor the things that are in the World*; I fear ye would cry out, we will embrace that Doctrine another time. We desire not to insist much upon these

these

these; but, O to believe that there is an eternity of pain, and that there is an eternity of joy. I will give you a description of the Atheist, and let him think upon it, it is easier to convince hundreds of you that you want the fear of God, then that ye want the faith and love of God. Oh, an imaginary faith, and a conceit of love, will ye ever quite these two idols? I confess, once ye shall have a faith that no man shal ever rob you of, and that is, the faith of that truth, that when once ye enter into eternity of pain, there is no redemption out of that place. Awake, awake, for behold the Judge cometh, and he shal render vengeance unto those that know him not. To his blessed and most precious Name we desire to give praise.

S E R M O N - I I.

1 Pet. 1. 4. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great & precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the World through lust.

THough Justice and Judgement be the habitation of his Throne, yet mercy & truth do go before it, as two divine Ushers to convey us home unto God. There are these two things that we would have a Christian principally to study. 1. That ye would be much in the study of these wrongs and injuries that ye have done to Christ. And 2. that ye would be much in the study of these infinite acts of precious condescendency that Christ hath manifested towards you, that
the

the one may provoke you unto sorrow and humility, and the other may provoke you unto a sweet astonishment and admiration. And I would ask you this, if Christ should present that challenge unto you, which *Absolon* presented unto *Hushai*. *Is this thy kindness unto thy friend?* O beloved, what could you answer, when you were thus reproved? I think if Christ had not forgetfulness for that blessed end, to forget the wrongs and injuries of his own, I know not unto what use Christ should have forgetfulness; for he knoweth not what it is to forget our good works, but he hath a blessed art of forgetting our wrongs; though we may say upon the contrary, that we have a cursed art of forgetting them our selves. There are three things that Christians doth forget; they forget much Christ, that is the great Author of the promises, so that he may charge them with this. *Why have ye forgotten me?* 2. They forget their mercies, and these divine receipts of love that Christ hath given unto them. 3. They forget even their iniquities, yea sometimes they forget them before Christ doth forget them, and pass an act of pardon upon them. I shal not stand long to plead with you for your undervaluings of that blessed and noble plant of renown: I think if there were no more to evidence that low esteeme that we have of Christ, but only this, that we are so much in slighting the promises, it were more then sufficient: but besides, is there not this to testify how much you undervalue that Holy and just One, that ye study more to have an outward conformity

formity unto him, then to have an inward. We may call the Christians of this time *Nephthali*, they are as a *hind let loose*, and they give goodly words; but we do not give Christ godly practices. And is not there this also that testifieth our undervaluings of Christ, that we slight so much secret and retired correspondence and communion with him? I suppose there are some that are here, whose consciences beareth them record they do not exercise themselves unto godliness: and I shal only say that word; that *Gideon* spake in another case: *If God be with us, how then is all this come upon us?* Such a spirit of formality, such a spirit of laziness, such a spirit of hardness, and such a spirit of undervaluing of Christ. I suppose, that if there were a *Chronicle* written of the lives of all the Saints that have been since *Adams* days, and the Christians of this time should read over that *Chronicle*, when they should begin and read the life of *Adam*, they might put this to the close of it, my life is not like his: and when they should read the life of *Abel*, they must put this to the close of it, my life is not like his: and when they should read the life of *Enoch*, they might put this to the close of it, my life is not like his. O! to which of the Saints can we go? And if ye should call, is there any that would answer you, *your life is like mine*.

But to come to the words we told you at the last occasion that we spake upon them, that there were these things concerning the promises holden forth in them. 1. The rise of the promise is holden

holden forth in the words, *Whereby*; or as we have cleared, the words may be thus rendered, *whom*, which relateth unto Jesus Christ.

The second thing concerning the promises holden forth in the verse, is, the property of the promises, and they are these four. 1. That the promises are free, holden forth in that word, *whereby* *are given unto us*: all the promises of the everlasting covenant are gifts, and no debt. There is the second property of the promises, that they are *unchangeable*, golden forth in that word, *given*, the gifts and calling of God being without repentance. And the third property of the promises was, that they were *exceeding great*. And the fourth, that they were *exceeding precious*.

The third thing concerning the promises, holden forth in the words, is the advantages that floweth with to a Christian by the promises, that by them we might be made *partakers of the divine nature*.

And the last thing concerning them was, that time when the promises were especially accomplished, it was then, *when we had escaped the pollutions of the world through lust*.

Now, as for the first thing, to wit, the fountain, original, and rise of the promises, which is Jesus Christ, by *whom*. In speaking upon this, we shall speak a little unto these two. 1. In what respect Christ may be said to be the fountain & original of the promises: and we conceive he may be said to be so. First, because he purchased the promises unto us by his own precious blood. There is not a promise in all the everlasting covenant, but it is

the price of the blood of the Son of God : this is clear in *Ephes.* 2. 12. 13. where speaking of the Gentils, that they were strangers unto the covenant of promise, he setteth down in the 13. verse, the way by which they were brought near unto the covenant, and had right unto it, it was through the blood of his cross ; and it is clear in *Ephes.* 3. 6. that the promises of the Gospel were given unto us in him ; that is, through the purchase of him, and his merits : and in *1 Pet.* 1. 19. where we are said to be bought by his blood ; for the promise of Redemption, was the price of blood. Secondly, Christ may be said to be the fountain of the promises, in this respect, that he is the person unto whom the promises of the covenant are first made, and through him are made over unto us : this is clear in *Gal.* 3. 16. the promises were given unto Abraham, not unto many seeds, but as unto one, that is, Christ : and it is clear from *2 Tim.* 1. 19. where the promises of Grace and Salvation are said to be given unto us in him before the World was made. It is true, that the promises are not given to Christ, considered only as the Son of God (for so he had no other relation to us then the Father or the holy Ghost) but yet they are first made to him as the Mediator & head of his Church, and as that blessed days-man, and King of Saints, and the great Lord-keeper of all the rights of the young heirs of glory : And we all receive out of his fullness, and grace for grace. Thirdly, there is this respect, in which Christ may be said to be the fountain of the promises, that he it is by whom

we have a right unto all the promises: this is clear in 1 Cor. 3. 12. 13. where these two are conjoynd, *ye are Christs*, and then *all things are yours*. As once a soul close with Christ in the covenant promise, there is not one promise in Scripture but he may write this superscription above it, *This is mine, this is mine*. Fourthly, Christ may be said to be the fountain of the promises, in regard that he is the person that applyeth the promises and maketh us to rest upon them, and to believe them. This David did acknowledge in Psal. 119. 49. *Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope*: as if David said, I had never believed a promise, except thou hadst caused me. And it is clear in Ephes. 2. 8. where faith is called the gift of God, even faith to believe the promises, it is the royal donation & gift of Christ. Fifthly, he may be said to be the fountain of the promises, in that he qualifyeth us for the accomplishment of them. Christ giveth us strength to obey the condition that is annexed to the promise, and Christ he infuseth habitual graces in us by which we may be helped to exercise faith upon the promises; so that grant all the Scriptures were promises, yet if Christ did not help us, we would never believe a promise, and there would never a promise be accomplished unto us. Sixthly, the last respect in which Christ may be said to be the fountain of the promises, is, that all the promises of the everlasting covenant, they have their accomplishment through him, according to that word in 2 Cor. 1. 20. *All the promises of God*

re in him yea, and in him amen : so that ye are equal to Christ, not only for the giving of the promises, but for the accomplishment of them also.

That which secondly we shal speak to from this, that Christ is the fountain of the promises, shall be to press upon Christians these three excellent and soul-concerning duties. The first, that they would not have a light account of the promises, since they are rivolets and streams that flow from that blessed Ocean. O but if a Christian did believe that the promise that he hath for his daily bread, it was bought with the blood of the second Person of the blessed Trinity, would he not have an high account of that promise? And let me tell you, it is impossible for the promises to be in high account with you, till once ye reduce them unto their rise, and to their fountain. But once know that all the promises are sweet streams of love, that have run through the heart of precious Christ, and from thence they have flowed unto you : and then when this is believed, how shall ye sit down and comfort your selves in the promises, and rejoyce exceedingly in them.

The second duty that we press upon you from this, is, that since Christ is the fountain and original of promises, be much in the application of the promises. And here I shal speak a little upon these three things. 1. A little unto the evidences and marks of those that have a right to apply the promises, and shal only name unto you these few: The first is, to be a person under convictions of sensible need and necessity of such a promise:

have ye conviction of such a necessity, then from
 then ye may infer, I have a right to the promise
 and are not these glad tidings? I know there are
 some that are under such convictions of their sin
 that they think it is boldness to apply the promi-
 ses: but I would say this unto you, that if ye were
 under sensible convictions of your lostness, you
 would give a world for an hair of a promise where-
 by to hang: believe it, the exercise of misbelief
 never at its height, till we would be content to die
 through the earth to get a promise, and till we
 were at that, that our souls would pursue after
 them from the one end of the world to the other.
 And for the grounds of this assertion, that sensible
 necessity giveth a right to the promises, if ye will
 look to these great promises of the everlasting
 Covenant, are they not given to that Christ
 that is under a need, *Isa. 55. 1. 2.* and *Matt. 11. 28.*
 where the great promise of the Gospel is given
 out, and the invitation of Jesus Christ, is unto
 these that are *weary and heavy laden*? Christ
 would account it an excellent courtesie, that you
 would not dispute, but believe, and that you
 would look upon your necessities, as his call to
 believe the promise. 2. A Person that hath a
 high account of the *Promiser*, he hath a right to
 apply the promises. Let once your soul close with
 Christ by Faith and Love, and then you may
 with boldness close with the promises. I confess
 if we were more in believing the promises, we
 would have a higher and more full esteem of the
 Promiser: would you know the reason that Christ

is not accounted matchless, it is because of this, our necessities of the promises is not alwayes within our sight, and our exercising of faith upon the promises is not our daily work. 3. This looketh like a right to the promise; that which is born in upon a Christians spirit when he is near God in prayer, and is under most sensible exercise under his own infirmities, he hath readily a right to apply that promise: as for instance, when a Christian is debarring himself out of Christ, which is but an unpleasant exercise; to meet with a promise born in upon their spirit, that giveth them some ground of hope, that they apply and rest upon Christ: or when a Christian is fainting under affliction, and is like to give over; to meet with a word of promise born in upon his spirit, that doth uphold him in the day of his tryal, he may probably conclude he hath a right to believe that promise. 4. There is that evidence, persons that have a high account of the promises, they have a right to apply the promises, it is an excellent and most concerning work for a Christian to believe the excellency of the promises, when he cannot have the actual application of the promises. For when once a Christian cometh to this, that the great things of the everlasting Covenant are matchless in his eyes, then that is, the valey of Acher, and a door of hope, that ere long Christ will apply them. 5. When a Christian hath great delight in the promises, when they are sweet to his taste, and are the refreshing and rejoycing of his heart, that is an undeniable sign that he hath

right to make use of such promises. Were your souls never refreshed by reading of the boundless covenant of Love, and the sweet promises that are in it? I would have Christians marking these promises that have upholden them in their straits; I would have them marking the promises that have been lively to their souls, and say, This once was my goodly meat, and made me to rejoyce in the house of my affliction; and I would have a Christian marking the time of the accomplishment of the promises, in which he will see infinite wisdom shining in ordering the accomplishment of the promises to such a time. And I would have a Christian marking the frame of his own spirit, when the promises are accomplished (as ye will find often in Scripture) and by all this ye should find such a reviving and profitable delight in the promises, that should give a very full evidence of your right unto them. 6. Lastly, when a Christian under straits can receive consolation from no other thing, but all prove Physicians of no value and miserable comforters: when a Christian is convinced there is no joy to be had under such a cross, but in the faith of the promises, that is an evidence that this person hath a right to the promises. I would only say this, O beloved in the Lord, is not this your guilt, your undervaluing of the promises, and your little exercise of faith? I would pose you with this, when last studied ye to apply any promise of the Covenant of Grace? When last did ye exercise faith upon any of them? Shal I tell you what is the practise

of the most part of us, we study perhaps to apply one promise; but for the rest of the promises, we lay them aside, and do totally neglect them: we study to apply the promises of salvation, and of having redemption through Christ, but for the promises of Sanctification, for the promises to help us to perform duties, for the promises to support us under the cross, for the promises to comfort us in our way to heaven, for promises in reference to all ordinary things, we are not much in application of these. O but if a Christian were believing the promises, he might sit down even while he is here and sing one of the songs of Zion, though yet but in a strange land.

The second thing that I shal speak to upon the application of the promise, shal be to propose unto you some rules that ye would make use of in the application of them, I shall name unto you these.

First, study these four things, one is the faithfulness and truth of the promises, that such a thing is the saying of him that is the faithful witness, and Amen: This was the practise of Paul, 1 Tim. 1. 15. the way how he was brought to make application of the promise, was, 1. By laying down that conclusion, this is a faithful saying; and Rev. 22. from the beginning to the 6. verse, when there are great promises made, and much spoken to the commendation of heaven, this is subjoynd in the 6. verse, these are the faithful and true sayings of God; as if John had said, all that I have spoken concerning heaven, will be to no purpose except ye believe the truth of the pro-

mises; and this was the practise of David, 2 Sam. 7. 28. *Thy words are truth, O Lord;* he subjoyned this unto the actual application of the promise. 2. Study the sweetness and excellency of the promises, this was the practise of Paul, 1 Tim. 1. 11. *This is a faithful saying, and then he subjoyneth and worthy of all acceptation,* and this was the practise of David, Psalm 119. 72. *I have esteemed the laws of thy mouth better then thousands of gold and silver:* O such an opinion, to esteem the promises better then thousands of gold! It is heretodox amongst the most part of you, that prefer the world before the promises of the covenant: and this was his practise, vers. 103. and vers. 162. *I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil:* he had a higher account of the promises, then to divide the spoil after war. 3. Let the Christian study the necessity that he hath of the promise, that there is no way of winning above that necessity, but the closing with the promise, and laying hold upon it. 4. Lastly, a Christian would study the suitability that is in the promise to answer their necessities, that if they be under need, there is a precious way of remedy manifested unto them by these.

The second rule that we would prescribe in the application of the promises is, that ye do not expect sensible comforts immediatly after ye have believed the promise. a Christian may apply the promises, and yet want the joy and sweetness that is in them. This is clear, Psalm 119. 25. *My soul cleaveth unto the dust.* There he is under much anxiety and much sorrow; and yet he is a believer

of the promises in the mean time, as the words following do declare, *quicken me according to thy word*, he layeth claim to the promise, and this is clear in the 81. verse of that Psalm, *My soul doth faint within me*: there is much exercise of sorrow, and yet he is a believer in the promise, *but I hope in thy word*, a Christian after he hath believed the promise, he would put a blank in Christs hand concerning the sweetness of the promises, to be made out in its own time. What is sense? is it not the precious indulgence of Christ that he giveth to his own? I would press this upon you, prophesie nothing before your believing of the promises, but having believed, ye may surely prophesie that the promise shal be accomplished in its own time, and the word that he hath spoken shal certainly come to pass: but as for sense, as for quickning, as for comforting, as for reviving, ye must put a blank in the hand of Christ, to dispense these things to you as he seeth fit.

The third rule in the application of the promises, is, that you do not build your faith upon this, that the promises shal be accomplished, because probabilities and reason seem to say the thing? I would say this to a Christian, that ye may oftentimes suspect the promise is not near to be accomplished, when reason saith, *Behold the word of the Lord cometh*, and that oftentimes the Lord is nearer when we begin to pass a conclusion, the word is not at hand, and the time of the accomplishment of the promise is not near: Certainly many times before Christ accomplish the

promises, he will learn us to be living above sense and reason, and he will have reason to submit to faith, and he will have probabilities to contradict the accomplishment of the promise; and when probabilities are furthest away, that is his time to work: this is clear in these two signal deliverances of the people of Israel from Egypt and Babylon, *Exod. 3. 4. 5. and Ezek. 37.* at the beginning. And therefore as a Christian would not quire his grip of the promises, because dispensations seem to contradict the accomplishment of the promise, and some time cryeth out; *Why art thou become unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?* So on the other hand, ye are to build your faith upon the promises, and not upon dispensations, even when favourable; seeing that we know the way that Christ taketh many times to accomplish the promises, is by contrary means to our apprehension: *His paths are in the whirle-wind, and his footsteps are not known.* And may we not cry out, Who can take up the wayes of God, whose wayes are more subtil then the way of an Eagle in the air, or the way of a Serpent upon the rock, or the way of a Ship in the sea, &c.

The fourth rule that we would prescribe unto you in the application of the promises, is, that ye would close absolutely with the promises, I mean without limiting the only One. There is a limited closing with the promise, which is the frequent exercise of our hearts; we will close with the promise, but with this restraint laid upon Christ, That whensoever we begin to believe the promises,

mises, all things might go as we desire : and this is the great occasion that we do so frequently reject our confidence, and do refuse our hope when God doth not answer our peremptory expectations.

Fifthly, we give you this rule, that ye would eye Christ much in the application of the promises. There is a three-fold sight of Christ that a Christian should have when he applyeth the promises, a Christian should have a sight of the boundless and condescending love of Christ, that so he may be constrained to hope, and may be constrained to love. 2. A Christian should eye the faithfulness and unchangeableness of Christ, that what his blessed lips have spoken, he will also do, and what he hath said, he will likewise bring to pass. And 3. in the application of the promise, he must eye the Omnipotency of Christ, that what he hath said, he is able to bring to pass. And, O when shall we have occasion to sing that song, what hath God wrought for us, which was the song that Balaam sung, who yet was but a prophane wretch.

6. There is this rule that we would prescribe unto you in the application of the promises, that a Christian after he hath applyed them, he would be much in the exercise of prayer for the accomplishment of those promises, this was the practise of David, 2 Sam. 7. 27. When God is passing precious promises, David doth subjoyn that word, *Therefore have I found in my heart to pray this prayer* : And we see in Ezek. 36. 37. all alongs that chap. God is passing most excellent promises; and yet in vers. 37. this is subjoyned,

For all these things, I will be enquired of the house of Israel, And in Jer. 29. 10. and 12. where the time is coming, when God would accomplish his good word (as he speaketh) that is subjoynd in verj. 12. Then shall ye call upon me, and seek after me: And in Dan. 9. 2. 3. when Daniel knew that the promise was near the time of its accomplishment, then he set himself for prayer and supplication to seek the face of God. I would lay these three words unto a Christian, the smallest mercy that a Christian meeteth with, if he can call it *Samuel*, that is the son of prayer, and if ye can call it *Isaac*, that is, The child of promise, he may then, and doth ordinarily receive much consolation in that mercy. O but a mercy flowing to a Christian therow a promise, if it were but a drink of cold water, and a piece of brown bread, it will be more excellent chear, then all the dainties of the Kings of the earth. O but to eat and drink, taking these things as the accomplishment of the promises, this would make us eat our bread, with singleness of heart, and much chearfulness. And there is this, secondly, I would say unto you, when a promise is accomplished, and a Christian is not much in the exercise of prayer in the accomplishment of it, one to a hundred if he loose not the sanctified use of the accomplishment of that promise. Ah, know ye not that a promise when it is accomplished, may be a curse to a Christian. That word is most terrible, Mal. 2. 2. *I will curse your blessings*. And the last word that I would say as to this, is, That a Christian who believeth the promises, notwithstanding that dispensations seem to

contradict is, that promise shal be made most refreshing unto his spirit, when it is accomplished. O but a Christian that never had much jealousy, nor much staggering about the accomplishment of the promise, when it cometh, it will be most refreshing unto him: And believe it, there is not one hours entertainment of jealousy about the accomplishment of the promise, but it will impair the sweetness of the promise when it is accomplished, except in so far, that the transcendent and free love of Christ is seen in the accomplishment of them, notwithstanding of our misbelief.

The last rule that I shal offer, a Christian in his application of the promises, when ye meet with objections that ye cannot answer, but they do silence you, I will tell you what ye should do with them, misken these objections, and lay them by. This was the practise of believing *Abraham*, Rom. 4. 9. *He considered not his own body being weak and the deadness of Sarahs womb.* The weakness of his own body, and the deadness of Sarahs womb, were so strong objections in the way of the accomplishment of the promises, that he could not answer them, and the way he taketh to refute them was, *He did not consider them*, as it were, he forgot these objections and went about his duty. The third thing that we shall speak to, in relation to the application of the promises, shal be somewhat for helping a Christian that is standing at too great a distance to get the promises applied.

First, a Christian would be much in the study

of these experiences of the faithfulness of God, and what others have met with. When ye begin to apply a promise, ye may be helped in the faith of applying promises, by beholding these great records of the faithfulness of God that are extant. This was the way the Angel took with *Mary*, *Luke 1. 36.* where helping her to believe that promise, that of her should be born the Messiah; this is the way that he strengthneth her, *Thy cousin Elizabeth is now with Child, and hath gone six months, even she that was called barren.* And I shall only name these two places in Scripture which may help you exceedingly, and strengthen you to believe the promises upon this account. There is that word in *Exod. 12. 41. and 51.* It is a most remarkable saying, *at the end of the four hundredth and thirty years, on the same very day, (there was not one day missed after the time that was set was accomplished) in that same very day they came out,* and this is marked in *vers. 51.* again. And there is that word *1 Kings 8. 56.* where *Solomon*, when he is singing most sweetly to God, he taketh observation of this, *Lo, saith he, there hath not failed one word that God hath spoken to you by his servant Moses.*

Secondly, ye would be much in the consideration of your own experiences; that you have in the accomplishment of promises formerly. This was *Dauids* way that he took to strengthen himself to believe the promise: *He that hath delivered me from the rage of the Lion and the paw of the Bear, he will deliver me from this uncircumcised Philistine. 1 Sam. 17. 35. and 37. 46.* And this

was the practise of the Apostle Paul, 2 Tim 4. 17. 18. God hath delivered me from that cruel Lion. And from thence he subjoyneth, and the Lord will deliver me from every evil work: And this was his practise, 2 Cor. 1. 10. where these three things are sweetly knit together, God hath delivered me, he doth deliver me, and he shal deliver me. There is not one experience of this kind, but it preacheth that unto you: O believe the promise, and do not call in question his faithfulness.

Thirdly, there is that help; that ye study much the excellency of the promises, that is the most noble and excellent way to move you to apply the promises according to that word, Psal. 119. 111 I have made thy testimonie mine heritage for ever, and the ground or it is that, Because they are the rejoycing of my heart. The sweetness of the promises would engage our heart to apply them.

And there is that fourth help, A Christian would study the omnipotency of God, that so he may be helped to believe and apply the promise: this is clear in Zech. 12. 1. where God going to pass many excellent promises, he ushers in that discourse with high and majestick descriptions of his power, in that he stretcheth forth the Heavens, and layeth the foundation of the Earth, and formeth the spirit of man with in him. And this was the practise of Abraham, Rom. 4. 21. the way how he came to believe the promise, He counted him able that had made it, that he might perform it.

Fifthly, for your help in applying of the promises, study much the unchangeableness of Christ, and his faithfulness, know that he is the

same yesterday, and today, and for ever. This was the way that Sarah came to the faith of the promises, *Hebr. 11. 11. She believed*, and the ground of it is, that *she judged him faithful that had promised.* There is not one act of misbelief that a Christian falleth into, but it saith, that God is not faithful, and that he is not true.

Now the last duty that we would press from this point, that Christ is the fountain of the promises, is that we may have an high esteem of the Promiser; even of Jesus Christ, *in whom they are yes, and Amen:* And I shal close all at this time with this, are there not many here, that have no respect unto him who is that *faithful witness and Amen;* who hath promised us *himself and all things:* and if ye will not take with the challenge, let your hearts but answer these two or three things. 1. Hath not the loss of things in the world affected your heart more, then ever absence from Christ did? Hath it not? And can such a Soul say, I have an high account of the Promiser? Is it possible, that these that will mourn more under the absence of their Idols, then for the want of him, that they can have an high account of Jesus Christ? I am perswaded of this, that there are some Merchants, that the loss of their goods at the Sea, hath diverted them from their night rest, and yet absence from Christ never did divert them from their sleep one hour. O when did love to find out Jesus Christ, and to enjoy his fellowship, make you rise up in the silent watches of the night, and to pursue after him? 2. Have not your Souls delighted more on the enjoyment

of the things of a World, then ever they did after the enjoyment of Christ? Is not this true, that the increase of wine and oyl, and of silver and gold hath affected your hearts more with joy then ever Christ did? And have you a high esteem of the Promiser? 3. Are you taking delight to entertain fellowship and communion with the Promiser; is this true? when went you to your prayer, but ye wearied ere ye went away? And have ye a high account of the Promiser? Is not that the language of your hearts; *O when shal the Sabbath be over? and when shal the new Moon be gone, that I may pursue after my Idols?* I would pose you with this, if there were no eye to take notice of you, would you not slight secret prayer? Would you not slight Family prayer? We love not to serve Jesus Christ. I know there are Atheists here, that would love to go to Heaven without faith, love, prayer, and repentance, they would love to go to Heaven by a way that never one went before them. And now I shall say but this one word to you that are the heirs of the promise; and have the blessed expectation of Heaven, what ever the World do, esteem ye highly of him: O remember and comfort your selves in the thoughts of the blessed day when Christ (after he hath past the Sentence of condemnation upon the wicked) shall go in upon the head of the troup of the first-born, he shall walk in before us through the Ports of the new *Jerusalem*, having crowns of immortal glory upon his head, and then shall follow after him his Angels, and then shall follow after him the blessed

company of the first-born, every one having the harps of God in their hand, and they shall be singing as they enter in thorow the ports of the City, *Hallelujah, to him that was dead, and is alive, and now liveth for ever more.* O to believe that day, when first we shall enter in thorow the streets of the new Jerusalem, when we shall be cloathed in white robes, having crowns upon our head! O such a day, if it were believed, might make us often shake our glass, and stretch out our neck (as the word is *Rom. 8. 19.*) till once we saw that blessed day were approaching to us! There is no wearying in heaven, the promises are now accomplished unto them, & they are inheriting the promises. When shall that word be accomplished? or when shall we have occasion to say it? *Mark 1. 37.* Behold, all men seek after thee; the word that these Disciples spake to Christ. O study to love him: study to believe on him: for be perswaded he is upon his way. And I shall say no more but this, that all the promises that are within the bounds of this everlasting covenant, they are *yes, & amen*, in an imbraced Christ, and laid hold on by faith. So I say, all the curses that are in *Deut. 26. 27. 28.* and all the curses that are within the volume of the book of this covenant, they shall be *yes & amen*, in a despised Christ, & not laid hold upon by faith.

S E R M O N I I I.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great & precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the World through lust.*

Sometimes the soul of a Christian doth move in the paths of God, and in the ways toward Zion, as the chariots of *Aminadab*, when they are under the soul-enlivening and quickening influences of heaven: And sometimes the soul of a Christian doth move in those blessed paths, as *Pharaohs* Chariots, they drive most heavily, when there is a cloud betwixt the precious face of Christ and them: and we conceive that sound and spiritual exercise of faith upon the promises, would make a Christians motion more swift towards Heaven. We grant Christ hath three different wayes of guiding sons and daughters to glory: there are some that Christ carrieth to heaven in a Chariot paved with love, that all alongs their life they are living within sight of that promised land, and are taken up with the refreshing fore-tastes of the heavenly joys: such a one was *Enoch*, who spent his dayes in walking with God: there are some that Christ guideth to heaven in a chariot that is drawn with speckled horses, they have mixed dispensations of sorrow and of joy attending them in their walk, they have a winter and a summer, they have night and a day, and such a one was *Job* 3. There are some that Christ carrieth to heaven in a fiery chariot, that all alongs their life they are under distracting terrors of the most High, and are living perpetually to their own apprehensions upon the borders of Hell, and such a one was *Heman*, whom Christ thus did guide to heaven: how ever, if we shal go there, we need not much dispute the way how we came, for he doth all things well. And
upon

upon the other part, Satan hath three different ways of guiding Souls unto everlasting torments; there are some that Satan carrieth to Hell in a Chariot of delusions, making them believe that they are still going to Heaven, and such are the Hypocrites in *Sion*: and I shall say, I think that Chariot was never filled, as it is in those dayes. O fear that anxious disappointment that many of you (it is like) will meet with! An Hypocrite hath strong hopes, he hath strong idols, and he hath strong delusions, these are his three attendants. And there are some that Satan carrieth to Hell in a Chariot of prophanity and ignorance of God, whose judgement goeth before hand, and they are known that they are going there. And there are some that Satan carrieth to hell in a chariot of civility, whose Religion stands in this concerning the letter of the law to be blameless. And certainly, believing of the promises, and studying to exercise faith upon them, is that which might prevent many of these damnable soul-destroying & murdering delusions that are within some of our breasts.

There are three things in Scripture that are called precious: Christ he is called precious, 1 Pet. 2. 7. Faith is called precious, 2 Pet. 1. 1. To you that are partakers of the like precious Faith with us: and the promises they are called precious, in the words that we have read, and faith (as it were) hath two blessed eyes, by one of these it beholdeth Christ, and by another of these it beholdeth the promises, and fixeth it self upon them. O Christians and expectants of heaven, would ye know

know what is the rise of the sad things that have befallen you in these days? It is this in short, ye believe not the promises. O Christians, what is the reason that ye carry not your crosses with patience, it is because ye believe not the promises by the which your soul must be upholden in the day of your affliction. O Christian, what is the rise of your little mortification? Is it not because ye believe not the promises: for by them ye should be made partakers of the divine nature? O Christian, what is the ground that ye pray so little, and that ye pray with so little success? It is because ye believe not the promises. A Christian when he goeth to pray, he should take these two things along; 1. The sensible convictions of his necessities: And 2. the precious promises that is given to answer that necessity; the one would provoke fervency, and the other faith.

Are not there some here that knoweth not what it is to pray upon a promise, and that maketh you pray to so little purpose? O Christian, what is the reason of your so much sorrow, and of your little spiritual comfort? It is, that ye believe not the promises: It is no wonder that your names be called *Marah*, because ye exercise not faith upon the precious promises of God. I think without wronging you, or any that are here; I doubt much if ever Christians had such hearts as the most part of us have: O what a heart is that, that can neither pray nor praise: both are alike mysteries unto them: what a heart is that, O Christian, that can neither believe promises, believe

lieve threatnings, nor obey commands? what a heart is that, that can neither sorrow for sin, nor rejoyce in God? and what a heart is that can neither love Christ when he is present, nor can they long for Christ when he is absent? and what a heart is that, O Christian, that can neither love heaven, nor can fear hell? and is there not such hearts with us, even with us that are here this day?

At the last occasion that we spake upon these words, we spake a little to the first thing in them, which was the rise and original of the promises, holden forth in that word, *whereby*, or *by whom*.

The second thing in the words, was the properties of the promises; and we told you that there were these four holden forth in the words. The first property of the promises is, that they are *free*, which is imported in that word, *are given*; all the promises of the everlasting Covenant being the precious and free gifts of God. Hence ye will see that oft-times the tenor of the Covenant of Grace runs upon that strain, *I will give you*, as is clear, Jer. 32. 29. *I will give you one heart*, and Ezek. 36. 26. *I will give you a new heart*, and Ezek. 11. 9. *I will give you*: it is the strain of the language of the Covenant of Grace, *to give*.

Now in speaking upon this first property of the promises; to wit, *their freedom*, I shal speak a little unto these two, the first thing shal be to point out unto you these two: the first thing shall be to point out unto you the way how a Christian may win to the distinct up-taking of the freedom

dom of the promises, and then I shal from thence press some duties.

And in short, as to the first, we conceive that a Christian may win unto the distinct uptaking of the freedom of the promises, by these considerations. 1. Let a Christian cast his eye upon the sweet rise, and spring or fountain of the promises, and there ye will see their freedom shining most clear: for what is the fountain of the promises? Is it not the boundless and everlasting love of Christ? this is clear in *Deut. 7.8.* where God giving a reason of all the great things that he had performed for them, he letteth down the rise of it, *Because I have loved you*, there being no reason of love, but love: and it is clear in *2 Sam. 7. 2.* where *David* having received many precious promises, he setteth down the rise of all these in that verse, *for thy words sake*, saith he, *and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these things to make them known to thy servant.* And it is clear, *16.8.* where God calleth the time of entering into Covenant with them, *a time of love*; that love it was eminently shining in that day when God did condescend to Covenant with them: and hence ye see in Scripture, that the promises they are called by that name of *mercy*, *Micah 7. 20.* *to perform the mercy to Abraham*, which is the promises, and they are so called, because mercy and boundless love is the sole fountain and spring of all these promises. Secondly, consider the persons, who have right to make use of the promises. Must not the promises be free when

when the proclamation is upon these terms, Rev. 22. 17. *Whosoever will; let him come*, there is nothing to give you a right to the promises, but only a willingness to embrace them, if ye will, ye may take them. And thirdly, ye may read the freedom of the promises in this, that any condition which is annexed to the promise, Christ giveth to the believer strength to perform that condition: It is known that faith is the condition of the promises; and it is certain Christ giveth a Believer that condition, as well as he giveth him the promise, Phil. 1. 29. *To you it is given to believe*, and Ephes. 2. 8. *It is the gift of God*. It is impossible for a Christian to perform the condition, except Christ who is surety for him did perform it. Fourthly, ye may read the freedom of the promises, if ye consider the time when the promises are accomplished, it is often at such a time, when the Christian hath been, and is under no very spiritual frame. Hence ye will see in Ezek. 16. 60. 61. that when the promises are accomplished, then God requireth confusion and blushing of face, because of their former ways; and Ezek. 36. 31. when the promises are accomplished, then that is the time when the Lord calleth them to remember their own evil wayes, and their doings that were not good; yea, he will have them and all the World to know, it is not for their sakes that he doth this; therefore he commandeth them to be ashamed and confounded for their own wayes, or the posture they were in when he accomplished his promise. And if there were no other thing to
speak

Speak the freedom of the promises, but the trying of the accomplishment of them with such a frame, it were more then sufficient. But besides this, see *Dauids practise*, 2 Sam. 7. 8. he readeth the freedom of the promises from his own imperfections, *What am I* (saith he) *and what is my fathers house, that thou shouldst have brought me hither to?* And even in the same Text, there is an Emphasis in that word, *to us, whereby are given to us*, as if the Apostle did say, to prove that the promises are gifts: I can bring no other argument so strong as this, *They are given to us*. Fifthly, ye may read the freedom of the promises, if ye will consider and take up the infinite fullness and all-sufficiency of the *Promiser*, that there is nothing without himself that can perswade him to give such promises. Hence ye will see that in *Gen. 17. 1*. when he is making the Covenant with *Abraham*, he putteth it still in the frontispiece of the Covenant, *I am God all-sufficient*, as it were, to put off all thoughts of merit that *Abraham* might have, and that *Abraham* might be perswaded of this, that there was not any imaginable perfection in himself, that could be the ground and rise of such promises. And there is that, lastly, from which ye may read the freedom of the promises, if ye consider the greatness of the promises: if they were of a low nature, then were it less to be wondered, if merit should come in to plead for it self. But when a Christian shall compare himself, and the greatness of the promises together, he cannot but then sing that blessed

ted long, These are the gifts, donations of God, and what am I, and what is my fathers house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?

Now the second thing that we purpose to speak to, is, to press some duties upon you from this, that the promises are free, and we shall lay before you these three. The first, That since the promises of God are free, then as ye would not destroy your own souls, be much in making use and application of the promises: Are not the promises your life? Did not all the Saints that went to Heaven before us, go to Heaven, living upon the promises? There was not a step of *Abrahams* life, but he walked with a promise in it; there was not an affliction that *Abraham* met with, but he took comfort to himself from the promises: and I shall remove these two mistakes that are incident to Christians in the application of the promises, even from this ground, that they are free.

The first is this, There are some Christians that will not apply the promises, because they are under the convictions of their own infirmities, and of their own baseness: so that when we press you to believe the promises, ye reject this counsel, because ye consult with your own infirmities. This was the practise of *David*, *Psalms* 22. 4. Our fathers trusted in thee, they trusted, and were delivered: but he durst not in the 6. verse. But I am a worm, and not a man, I am a reproach amongst the people. And it is that same divinity that is in these days, when we press you to believe the promises, because of the great cloud of witnesses that have

have gone before you, that believed the promises. O say ye, if I were like *David* and *Abraham*, I would believe the promises; but truly *David* ~~am~~ that same, that lived before you, if I were like my fathers, I would believe the promises; but I am not like my fathers. And therefore I would say to you these two words. 1. Are ye inferior or short unto *David* in holiness, or necessities? We do not question, but all of you will answer we are not inferior to *David* in necessities, but in holiness; Then say we, if ye be not inferior to *David* in necessities, then make use of the promises: for as we cleared the last day, necessity giveth a right in making use of the promises. 2. I would say, I am certainly perswaded, that sensible necessity would cut short many of our formal debates, in closing with the promises: necessities, as ye use to speak, hath no law, and necessity hath no manners. Let me say that to you who will not close with the promises, that if ye were under sensible necessity, if Christ should forbid you to close with such a promise, ye would close with it, though he forbid you, as the woman of *Canaan* did: there is nothing but sensible necessity will overcome it: necessity never disputes its right, for it goeth over the belly of such a dispute, it presently maketh use of that that its need calleth for.

Secondly, there is that other mistake amongst Christians in believing the promises, that they want the qualifications annexed to the promises, and therefore they dare not believe the promise, especially that promise of closing with Christ:

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they think they are not under such a deep mealure of humiliation, of sorrow for sin, nor under such lively apprehensions of the excellency of Christ. And I shal say but these six things unto those that will not close with Christ, because they want qualifications, or at least have not these qualifications after such a way. First, Let me tell the (O Christian that thus disputes) go between the first steps of a Christians way to Heaven and the last; and see if ye can behold a grave upon which this is written; behold, here lieth a man or a woman that came to Christ to imbrace him, and he would not receive them; Did ye ever behold such a grave as this? And why then do ye so much dispute? Will ye take a trial of Christ whether he will refuse you if ye come, and if he shal refuse you, sure I am, he will do that which he never did to any before you. The second thing I would say to such, that the want of such degrees of such things, ought not to be a ground of your not closing with Christ, for if ye have these qualifications that ye require, ye would maintain that same dispute that ye do now: for when we desire you to close with Christ, ye answer, that your sorrow is not come to such a height as it ought, nor is your humiliation come to such a height, as ye pitch for your self to come to. O Christian, if ye come to ten times more and yet ten times more, ye would have that same dispute then which ye have now: and the ground of it is this, the more that a Christian hath real sorrow, he will oftentimes be the more

in the apprehension, that he hath no sorrow. Thirdly, if ye want the qualifications that are required in those that should close with Christ in the Covenant of promise, then come to Christ to get these qualifications. I would only ask at you, think you to spin sorrow for sin out of your own hearts? Think ye to spin humiliation for sin out of these wretched breasts of yours? ye must come to Christ for sorrow, as well as ye come to Christ for life. Fourthly, all the qualifications that are annexed unto the promise of closing with Christ, and coming to him, they point out rather the qualification of them that will come, then the qualification of those that ought to come. Ye read such a command as that, *Come unto me, all ye that are wearied and heavy laden.* O say ye, I am not weary, I am not under the burden of sin, therefore I cannot come. I will tell you what is the meaning of that command; Christ inviteth those who have the greatest unwillingness, to come and get willingness: But withal, it sheweth this, none will come to get rest from Christ, but these that are first weary: and that this is the Lords method of working, first to make weary, and then to ease, but no such matter in his word, that first we must have a weariness of our own making, or else he will not receive us: Now, but when ye come, ye will be weary, and he will receive you. Fifthly, let me say to you who thus disputes, make your want of qualifications the very ground of your closing with Christ, I shall but in three places let you see this strange argu-

ing of faith in closing with the promises : there
 that in *Psal. 40. 11. 12.* *Let thy truth continually*
preserve me ; that is , let thy promises be accom-
 plished and made lively unto me , which are my
 preservation : and would ye know the ground and
 reason that he annexeth unto this ; for , saith he
Innumerable evils hath compassed me about ; they
have taken such hold of me , that I am not able to
look up. He maketh his very want of qualificati-
 ons the ground of his closing with the promises
 and seeking the accomplishment of it. And then
 is that second expression which is most wonder-
 full , in *Psalms 25. 11.* *David prayeth for the ac-*
complishment of that promise : pardon my sin
upon that same very account , because it is great.
 And I shall give you a third place in which the
 arguing of faith is most mysterious , *Exod. 33. 3.*
 compared with *Exod. 34. 9.* In the first place , God
 denieth the accomplishment of that promise , of
going up amongst that people. And the ground he
 giveth of it is , *because ,* saith he ; *ye are a stiff-*
necked people. And *chap. 34. vers. 9.* when *Moses*
is praying for the accomplishment of that promise
that God would go up amongst them : he taketh
 that same very argument out of the mouth of
 God : *Go up amongst us ; for ,* saith he , *we are a*
stiff-necked people. God said , he would not go up
 because they were a stiff-necked people , and *Mo-*
ses desireth him to go up , because of this. And
 there is this , lastly , that we would say to you that
 so much dispute : If ye would have these qualifi-
 cations that ye want , ye would study to close with

Christ by faith : Would ye have sorrow for sin ? then believe. Would ye have high thoughts of Christ ? then believe. Would ye have humiliation ? then believe : for believing is a mother grace unto all these.

The second duty that we would press upon you from this consideration that the promises are free, is, that when the promises are given to you, and are accomplished, ye would study to be denied to any merit in your selves, which ye may suppose to be the rise of the giving or accomplishment of these promises. There is nothing that a Christian receiveth, but it is a fruit of infinite love : there is not a conviction that tryeth a Christian, but it is the fruit of infinite love : there is not one blink of the precious countenance of Christ, but it is the fruit of infinite love : there is not the least degree of hatred against sin, but it is the fruit of infinite love, there is not the least promise that is accomplished unto you, but it is the fruit of infinite love : so that upon all our receipts from God, there is reason to sing that song, *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thee doth belong the glory.* And therefore I would press this upon you. O Christian ! reduce all your merits unto the fountain, and there sit down and pen Songs of everlasting praise to him. Will ye but take a view of this, there is not one bit of bread that ye eat, that is within a promise, but it is a mercy that hath come running to you through the bowels & tender heart of Christ : his heart is the fountain of all his mercies : & they sweetly stream out of that

precious fountain, so that if he had no other thing
to commend your mercy from, but that it is a gift
of the heart of Christ, ye may take it in your arms
upon this account, and solace your selves with it.

The last duty that we would press upon you
from this consideration, that the promises are
free, is this, ye would be studying to close with
Jesus Christ, that is promised and freely holden
out to you in the Gospel. O sinner of eighty years
old! O sinner of sixty years old! O Atheist of
fourty years old! And, O sinner of twenty years
old, and downward! I do here invite you, as the
Ambassador of Jesus Christ, to imbrace Christ
freely offered in the promise; yea, I do invite you
by all the vertues of that noble *plant of renown*, by
that everlasting love that dwelt in his precious
heart, by all the sufferings and wounds that he
received, by his eternal glory, and by all the ble-
ssings, and joyes of Heaven, and by that love that
ye owe to your precious and immortal souls, that
ye would come and imbrace him freely offered to
you in this Christ. And for the further pressing of
this, and for clearing of the way of your closing
with him, I shall first propose four precious Go-
spel-mysteries, and sweet agreeing contradictions
(if so we may speak) held forth in Scripture.
1. *Come and buy Christ, and yet buy without money;*
that is, come and receive Christ, and ye shall have
as unquestionable a right to him, as if ye had
bought him, that is, *so buy without money*; ye have
nothing to commend you to Christ, but necessi-
ties, and necessities biddeth you go, & Christ bid-
deth

leth you come? why then will ye sit this call?
2. What a Gospel-mystery is that, ye are to buy
Christ, and yet Christ is above price? there is no-
thing that we can give to buy that pearl of greatest
price, and yet we must buy him: then the mean-
ing is, come and buy Christ by faith, and by for-
saking of your idols, this is all the price that he
doth require for himself; and so he requireth no-
thing of you but what he himself doth give, or
what is both your duty and advantage to forsake,
and which is no gain for him to receive. Christ
is not enriched by your hearts, and by giving of
your consent to him. 3. This is a Gospel-myste-
ry, that *we are to buy without money, and without
price, and yet to buy with a price*; according to that
word, Prov. 17. 17. there is a price put in the hand
of fools, to buy wisdom; and what is the meaning
of that, *to buy with price, and to buy without price*?
It is in short this, though Christ be offered to
you in the Gospel free lie, ye must not sit down,
but be active in closing with him. What is the
price that Christ requireth of you? Even this,
that ye would forsake your soul-destroying idols,
and that ye would forsake your former evil wayes,
and take hold of the present opportunitie for im-
bracing him. And, O! cursed shal that heart be
that will not embrace Christ. O! but to have
him one hour in our arms, it were well worth ten
thousand eternities of the enjoyments of all thing
that are here below: Ye would never open your
arms again to another lover, if once ye had him
between your breasts. O but a sight of him that

now is the eternal ravishment of all that are above, would transport your hearts with joy, with delight, and admiration, above all expression. Fourthly, there is that Gospel-mystery by which we would press you to embrace Christ. *A Christian must buy Christ, and yet he must have him freely.* Is there not an inconsistency, do you suppose, between buying and having freely? But I would say this to clear it, Christ is both the seller, he is the wares, and he is the buyer. Christ he presenteth himself unto your hearts, and he desireth to fill himself, and he perswadeth & freely enableth you to buy him. I will tell you what Christ doth, he standeth without our hearts, and within our hearts: he standeth without and knocketh by the Word; and he standeth within, and openeth by his Spirit: Christ he both commandeth, and he obeyeth; both within doors, and without doors, and all this he doth freely.

The second thing I shall say to perswade your hearts to take Christ freely promised and offered unto you, shall be this; Will ye consider that there is willingness in the heart of Christ to take you. I shall give you these six things that speaketh out Christs willingness to receive you. First, doth not he command you to come and receive him? and if you could multiply objections throughout eternity, why ye should not close with Christ, ye may cut them all asunder with his knife, *This is his Commandment*: And doth he not command you in Matth. 11. 28. *Come unto me all ye that labour*: And Isai. 55. 1. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come*

ye to the waters. Secondly, He doth regrave and deeply resent it that ye will not come. I think Christ never wept so bitterly, as that day when he weeped over Jerusalem, that they would not embrace him, Luke 19.41. If thou, even thou, at least, in this thy day, had known these things that belong unto thy peace, And Joh. 5.40. Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life. O what think ye can be the rife of this, that Christ should sorrow, because ye will not give up your hearts to him? doth he increafe his gain when ye give him your hearts? No certainly, but he cannot endure that madness in you, that ye should forsake your only gain. Thirdly, Would you do Christ a joyfull turn, and make his heart glad? Embrace him. This is clear, Luke 15. 5. that when he findeth the sheep that is going astray, He returneth rejoicing. Fourthly, I say more unto you, would ye make all the Persons of the blessed Trinity to rejoyce, would ye make all the Angels of Heaven to sing, would ye make all the Saints that are round about the Throne to exalt for joy; then give your hearts up to Christ, and close with him in the Covenant of promise; according to that word, Song 6. last v. Return, return, O Shulamite, return, return, that we may look upon thee. Four times that command is repeated, return, and the great argument with which he backeth it, is, That all the Persons of the Trinity may rejoyce, That we may look upon thee. Fourthly, consider but how he hath condescended to give himself at a very low rate: What will ye give for Christ? O sinners, what will ye give for him? Would ye give

the World for Christ? I will tell you what ye will get Christ for, ye will get him for a very look, *Isa. 55. 22. Look unto me, O all ye ends of the earth;* And think ye not that this is a matchless mercy, that the thirty three years sufferings of Christ, all the pains and tortures of the heart, his being under the unsupportable wrath of an offended God, the fruit of all that should be yours for a look, Will ye deny that to Christ? Oh, do ye ever think to find a more down-coming market? Yea, foolishly, doth not this speak an admirable willingness to have you, he is to give you that look. It is impossible for these cursed eyes of ours, ever to give precious Christ a look, and therefore he hath promised to give that to us, that we may give to him, *Zech. 12. 10. They shall look to me*, that very look ye are to get from Christ, and ye see it is within the compass of a promise. Lastly, That speaketh Christs willingness to receive and take you, that he doth not take the first refusal. O Christians that are now in Christ, if Christ had taken an hundred refusals from you, ye should never have been in heaven, but he waiteth for an answer, and doth not take us at our first word: According to that word, *Song 5. 2. I am wet, saith he, with the drops of the morning, and my locks with the dew of the night.* He was long knocking at her heart, and stayed a long time there patiently, suffering all the injuries he could meet with. And I would pose you, think ye that if one of the richest of you were suing a very poor Woman, and she refused you so many times, would your proud hearts submit to take her? And yet how oftentimes hath the precious

ious heart of Christ submitted to many affronts and refusals that we have given him. I think, if it were possible, Christians would wink when first they behold Christ upon the day of their espousals: for I suppose there will be a great dispute between shame and love, desire and confusion: shame will make you to close your eyes, because ye have oftentimes undervalued that Prince, and yet love do not let you close them; desire will put you to a look, though reflecting upon your former wayes, will make you blush and be shamed.

Thirdly, to perswade you to receive Christ in the offer of his free promises, I shall say but these three words and close. 1. Look to these excellent gifts that Christ bringeth with him, he bringeth Justification with him, and is not that an excellent gift? He bringeth Sanctification with him, and is not that an excellent gift? He bringeth joy of the holy Ghost with him, and is not that an excellent gift? He bringeth patience under sufferings with him, and is not that an excellent gift? But why should I name what he bringeth? He bringeth himself, and all things, and what would ye have more? O, but for one saving blink of his face, it would make your hearts lay down your enmity that you have maintained so long. 2. O Christian! that ye may close with Christ, do but remember the happiness that ye will have in imbracing him. I told you not long since, and now I put you in mind again, there is a sixfold crown which shal be put upon your head. Would you have long life? then come to Christ, and you

you shall have a Crown of eternal life. Would ye
 have glory? then come to Christ, and ye shall
 have a crown of glory. Would ye have know-
 ledge of the mysteries of God? then come to
 Christ, and he shall crown you with knowledge.
 Would you have an eternal felicity, and an un-
 interrupted happiness? then come to Christ, and
 ye shall have an immortal crown. Would you have
 holiness and sanctification? then come to Christ,
 and ye shall have a crown of righteousness; yea,
 he shall put a royal crown upon your head, a crown
 of pure gold; and then that word shall be accom-
 plished to the full, Zech. 9. 16. *Then shall they be
 as the stones of a crown lifted up, and as an ensign
 upon the Land.* O what a day think ye will it be,
 when Christ shall hold your Crowns upon his
 hand, and shall put them upon those heads never
 to be removed again: Here we are often put to
 sigh out that lamentation, *The Crown is fallen
 from our heads; woe unto us, for we have sinned:*
 but there shall be no sin to make our crown to tot-
 ter. 2. I must tell you, there is a fourfold sure of
 apparel that ye shall be cloathed with ere long; ye
 are now cloathed with heaviness; but then ye
 shall be cloathed with the garments of praise. And
 did ye ever know such a robe as that? Is it not a
 more excellent robe, then the robes of Kings and
 Emperors in the earth, to be clothed with praises?
 Many of them are and shall be for ever cloathed
 with infamy and shame. 2. Ye shall be cloathed
 with change of raiment, and shall be brought unto
 the King *in raiment of needlework.* O poor Lads
 and poor Lads, that sitteth upon the Dung-hill,

that knows not what it is to have change of apparel, ye shall have it in that day, when Christ shall solemnize the marriage with you; ye shall misken your self. O Christian! if ye know your self never so well, ye will be forced to cry out: *O is this I? O is this I, that am now made perfect through his comeliness.* 3. Ye shall be cloathed with the garments of immortal glory; ye that have your foundation in the dust, and dwell in the houses of clay, ye shall then be cloathed with these robes of immortality, and cloathed upon with your house from Heaven. And lastly, ye shall be cloathed with the garment of the spotless righteousness of Christ. O such a majestick walk as ye will have, when ye shall have a Scepter in one hand, a Palm in the other, these robes put upon your back, and these crowns upon your heads, and then shall be walking through these streets that are paved with gold.

3. I shall give you this word to think upon, that there are five things that shall be your exercise in Heaven. 1. Ye shall be constantly taken up in wondering: If it be not presumption for us to think a little, what is the exercise of Christ and the Saints that are above, we conceive it is this: Christ is wondering at their beauty, and they are wondering at his beauty: Christ is looking upon them, and they upon him: and is it not true, that if Christ be not ravished with one of our eyes, Song 4. verse 9. much more shall he be ravished when both our eyes shall be given to him, and shall eternally behold him, without going a whoring after other lovers. 2. Ye shall be continually in the exercise of praise: joy and light shall be flow-

ing in, and admiration and praise shal be flowing out eternally ; ye shall then sweetly warble upon these harps of God , and shal cry, *Hallelujah unto him that sitteth upon the Throne* : There shal be no discord there ; there is a sweet and beautiful harmony amongst all these spiritual and heavenly Musicians. O but to hear them , it were a Heaven , though we had not that blessed lot as to sing with them. 3. Ye shall be continually taken up in the exercise of love. Faith is your predominate grace while ye are here, but love shal be your predominant grace when ye are there. O ! is it not a mystery to take up these sweet emanations of love and of delight , that shall pass betwixt Christ and you ? Ye shal be infolding Christ, and Christ shal be infolding you. 4. Ye shal be continually beholding him. I think it hardly possible for the wife to remember her husband in heaven, though she loved him as her own heart , they will all be taken up in beholding him that sitteth on the Throne : they will think it too low an object to be taken up with looking upon another in these relations : all will be ravished beholding him, and one another in him , and for him. O the blessed exercise of those that are now entered within that city, and within those gates, whose name is praise. 5. Ye shall be continually taken up in beholding : Ye shal be alwayes knowing , and yet never able to comprehend the endless mysteries and perfections of Jesus Christ. O such a study ! Is it not pleasant alwayes to be studying Christ ? and will not these things perswade you ?

And now but a word more to those that will

not have this free offer: If ye will not embrace Christ and take him, let me tell you, I would not be in the stead of that person for ten thousand Worlds: If ye will not embrace Christ, and take him for your portion, the stones of the wall of this house will bear witness against you, and they shall have a tongue to speak against you, that ye have been invited to take him, and would not. Ere long that day is approaching, and is drawing near, when the Atheists and refusers of Christ they shall change their faith, they shall change their love, they shall change their fear, and they shall change their joy, and they shall change their mind: Ye shall change your faith, ye that are refusers of Christ; for I know there are many that think they have closed with Christ, who never did close with him: that faith shall flee away, and ye shall believe the contrarie; Ye shall change your love, or at least your opinion of your love: Ye think ye love Christ, but ye embrace him not, I will tell you what will be your exercise, and I can tell you nothing so terrible: Christ shall eternally hate you, and ye shall eternally hate Christ: there shall be a mutual hatred betwixt you two for evermore. O that dreadful word, Zech. 11. 8. it shall then be accomplished to the uttermost; *My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me.* And ye shall change your fear; for now though ye fear not God, nor reverence man, yet there the horror of God shall make you shake as a leaf, and ye shall change your light and your judgment. Ye do now undervalue Christ, and think him of nothing worth: when Christ is presented to you,

there

there is no beauty why ye should desire him: But
 O think on that day when Christ shall sit down
 in the clouds, and ye shall see his beautiful face,
 every ray of which shall be able to captivate your
 hearts, if they were then capable to be ravished
 with the sight. O what will be your thoughts of
 him? And if the blessings of a crucified Saviour
 come not upon you, then the eternal, and the un-
 supportable vengeance of Christ shall light upon
 your heads, that would not condescend to take
 him: ye shall be cursed in your life, ye shall be
 cursed in your death, and ye shall be cursed after
 death; what say ye to it? Are ye content to take
 him? Ye may bless the day that ever ye were born
 if ye could once come to close with Christ. Now
 to him that hath the keyes of the house of David,
 that can open your hearts to give himself entry,
 we desire to give praise.

S E R M O N I V.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding
 great & precious promises, that by these you might
 be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped
 the corruption that is in the World through lust.*

T Here are three most glorious and excellent
 gifts that God hath bestowed upon man:
 there is that comprehensive gift of heaven, Jesus
 Christ, who is so called, John 4. 10. and sure such
 a gift as that, ought in some sense to blind our
 eyes, and make us look upon all things that are be-
 low him, as nothing. The second Royal gift that
 the Lord hath given, is, the precious promises of

the everlasting Covenant, which are given unto us thorow him. A Christian that is united unto him by the blood of faith, he may write this above the head of every promise of the everlasting Covenant, *this is mine, and this is mine.* His third precious gift, is the gift of faith, which is that grace which maketh use of the former two: and we conceive that our little making use of these three excellent gifts, is the great occasion and cause why these four sad and lamentable evils have befallen us. 1. The evil of a silent conscience, that though we be profound to commit iniquity, and do love a reward under every green Tree, yet our consciences doth not speak nor reprove us: and if at any time they do speak, yet there are some that are so possessed with a dumb and deaf spirit, they can neither hear what God doth speak, nor can they hear their conscience. 2. The evil of a silent rod: we know not the voice of our rod, *and who is he that hath appointed it?* God doth not now open our ears to discipline, nor seal up our instruction. 3. There is that evil of silent mercies: the mercies that we receive of God we understand not the language of them: are not our mercies Barbarians unto us, speaking to us in an unknown tongue? And yet we may say, there is not a rod nor mercy a Christian meets with, but it hath a voice, if we did understand it. And lastly, there is that evil that hath befallen us: and alas, this is the cape-stone of all, a *silent God*, who doth not hearken unto the voice of our cries, but turneth about the face of his Throne, covering

ring himself with a cloud in his anger, so that our prayers cannot pass through. Alace! may not each Christian of this time cry out, *Call me no more Naomi, but call me Marah, because the Lord hath dealt bitterly with me.* In short, I think there are these two things that may be our lamentation upon the high places of Israel. First, that we live without sight of God. And secondly, that we live without sight of our selves; and all this is, because we live without a sight of these precious gifts, Christ and his promises.

But now to the words. We told you, that in them there were these four things holden forth concerning the promises. 1. The original and fountain of the promises, in that word, *whereby, or by whom.* 2. The properties of the promises which we told you, were these four. The first was, that the promises were free, holden forth in that word, *they are given*; all the promises of the everlasting covenant being the noble gifts of God. The second (of which we are to speak at this time) is this, that the promises of the covenant they are *unchangeable*, which is imported also in that word, *they are given* the gifts of God being indeed without repentance. And as to this: 1. We shal prove the truth of the point; and for this end, consider that place, Numb. 23. 19. which was a part of Balaams song; *Hath he not spoken it, and will he not also do it? Hath he said it, and shal it not also come to pass?* And Psal. 39. 34. *I will not break my covenant, nor alter the word that hath gone out of my mouth*; and the point is clear also from the name

that the promises getteth in Scripture, are they not called, *The sure mercies of David?* *Isai. 55. 3.* And are they not sometimes in the Scripture called truth, as we may see from *Micah 7. 20.* Thirdly, the nature of the covenant proveth it, in that it is called, *an everlasting covenant*, and sometimes a *covenant of salt*, because that covenant is above the reach of alteration or putrification. And fourthly, it may be likewise shown from the constant experience that the Saints have had of the unchangeableness of the promises. This *Joshua* taketh notice of, *chap. 23. 14.* where when he was dying, *There hath not failed*, saith he, *one thing of all these good things that God hath spoken;* and he is so confident of this, that he is forced to repeat that word over again in that verse, and he taketh notice of it, *Josh. 21. 45* where he hath the same expression again! *There hath not failed*, saith he, *one thing of all the good things that God hath spoken:* and this *Solomon* he took notice of, *1 Kings 8. 56.* *There hath not failed one thing that God hath spoken unto us by Moses:* and indeed there is near six thousand years experience that preacheth this truth, *The promises are unchangeable;* so that we may now say: *The word of the Lord is tryed as silver purified in a furnace of earth hot seven times.* If there had been any falshood in the precious promises of the everlasting Covenant, six thousand years tryal should have brought it to light: but doth not every one of the cloud of witnesses that hath gone before us, leave this testimony upon record: *Faithful is he that hath promised, who will also do it: his promise*
is.

is with the night, and with the day, it cannot be altered: the ordinances of heaven continue to this day; much less can this Covenant of love be broken or altered: only we would have you taking this caution by the way, that there are some conditional promises that God passeth unto his people, which in the depths of his spotless wisdom, he doth not accomplish unto those who never fulfill the condition: such was that promise that he gave to the Israelites in the land of Egypt, of their possessing the Land of Canaan, who yet died in the wilderness. And hence is that strange word, *Numb. 14. 34. Ye shall know my breach of promise, saith the Lord*; which is a word spoken after the manner of men, not importing any change of purpose in God, but only shewing that because they did not believe, and so fulfill the condition of the promise, therefore it was not to be fulfilled personally to them.

The second thing that we shall speak to upon this, that the promises are unchangeable, shall be to propose these six golden pillars and excellent foundations, upon which the unchangeableness of the promises is built. And the first of them is, the *Omnipotence of God*, that there is nothing he hath promised, but he is able to effectuate and to bring to pass: Therefore, *2 Cor. 6. 18.* when God hath been passing many excellent promises, he strengtheneth their faith with this, *Thus saith the Lord God Almighty*: and no doubt, where the word of this King is, there is power; and who can say unto him, *What doest thou?* O misbeliever of the

the precious promises of the Covenant ! be ashamed to cast your eyes to Heaven above , or to the Earth beneath ; we think the Stars , the Sun , the Moon , and all the works of God , they may speak that to you , do not misbelieve God , but trust in him , *That is wonderful in counsel , and excellent in working.* The second is , the wisdom and infinite counsel of God : he hath not only compleat ability to accomplish the promise that he hath given , but he hath the depths and treasures of knowledge , by which he hath contrived the way of the accomplishment of such a promise. Hence is that word , 2 Sam. 23. 5. that the Covenant it is well ordered , which speaketh out the wisdom of God ; and then that word is subjoyned , the Covenant is sure ; yea , the Covenant of grace is such a thing , that there is so much of the art of Heaven , so much of infinite wisdom shining in it , that it is called , *The counsel of God* , Heb. 6. 17. *That ye might know the immutability of his counsel.* The third golden pillar , is the *infinite love of God* , that though there be nothing in us that can put him to accomplish the promises , yet he will take an argument from his own love to make out such a promise to us. There is sometimes (if not alwayes) nothing in us , but that which may speak forth delays of the accomplishment of the promises ; but when God can bring no argument from his own love , as Deut. 7. 7. 8. where giving a reason of the accomplishment of many promises , and of his love to them , *I loved you* , saith he , *because I loved you* ; there being no reason that can be

given

given of love, but love. The fourth is, *The unchangeableness of the Promiser*, that he is the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever, and without all alteration and shadow of change. Hence ye may see in *Exod. 3. 14.* when God is repeating many precious promises unto *Moses*, he (as it were) strengtheneth *Moses* faith with this, *I am*, saith he, *that I am*; which we conceive to point forth the unchangeableness of God, that what he hath said, he will certainly accomplish in its own time; and though the vision do tarry, yet at last it shall speak. The fifth is, *the faithfulness of God*, and that he is one that cannot lie, but certainly will make out what he hath spoken. Love it maketh the promises; the faithfulness and power of God accomplisheth the promises, and the infinite wisdom of God chooseth the most fit time for performing of them. Hence it is said, *Psalms 119. 89. 90. Thy word, O Lord, is for ever sealed in Heaven*; and the ground of it is in the following verse: *For thy faithfulness is unto all generations.* Hence you may see, that often-times when God is making promises to his own, he putteth to that word, *I that speak in righteousness*, *Isai. 45. 19.* and *Isai. 63. 1.* O, must not the promises be unchangeable that are made by the Father who is the God of truth? Must not the promises be unchangeable that are received and merited by the Son, that is Truth it self, and the faithful Witness and Amen? Must not the promises be unchangeable that are applied by the holy Ghost, that is the Spirit of Truth? And must not the promises be unchangeable

able that are made known unto us by the Gospel, that is the word of Truth? Was there ever any who could leave that upon record of God, that he was unfaithfull in the accomplishment of his promises. O what a clear sight of the faithfulness of God shall a Christian get, when he shall be standing upon the utmost line between Time and Eternity, then he will see God faithful in accomplishing all his promises unto him from first to last. The last golden pillar is the justice of God. His Justice is now putteth him to accomplish his promises: Mercy and Righteousness have now kissed each other. Hence is that word, 1 John 9. *He is just and faithful to forgive.* So that now the accomplishment of the promises, it is not only an act of love, but it is an act of justice also. We confess indeed, love and mercy maketh the promises; but justice and truth also putteth God to the accomplishment of them. Hence is that word, Mich 7. 20. *To perform the Truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham.* Why is it mercy to *Abraham*, and is it truth to *Jacob*? It is in short this, because mercy made the promises to *Abraham*, but truth did accomplish the promises to *Jacob*.

The third thing that we shal speak to from this, that the promises are unchangeable, shall be to press these six duties upon you from this point.

O Christians and expectants of Heaven, who have Christ in you, the hope of glory, rejoyce and be exceeding glad that the promises are unchangeable. 1. This is a duty that is pressed from this

this ground, Heb. 6. 18. *That by two immutable things we might have strong consolation.* There is exceeding much joy that may come to a Christian from this, that the promises shall be accomplished in their own time. We conceive that the word *unchangeable*, it is ingraven upon the head of many a Christians mercies. Is not *unchangeable* written above the head of our promises? Is not *unchangeable* written upon the head of our blessedness? Is not *unchangeable* written above the head of our enjoyment of God? That day is coming when we shall have *unchangeable* love, *unchangeable* enjoyment of God, and all things *unchangeable*. And we conceive, that if these two were believed; the truth of the promises, and the unchangeableness of the promises; a Christian might walk through this valley of tears with joy, and comfort himself in hope.

The second duty we would press, is this, that ye would surcease and give over disputings and carnal reasonings about the accomplishment of the promises, since the promises of God are unchangeable: ought not we with this, to silence misbelief, and all that blind humane reason can say: this is pressed, Heb. 6. 16. *An oath for confirmation, it is an end of all strife.* Gods confirming of his Covenant by an oath, it ought to cut short the disputings of misbelief: And here give me leave to point out a little these grounds upon which it is that Christians do so much dispute the accomplishment of promises, and to let you see how all these grounds may be answered from

the six pillars that were given of their unchangeableness.

The first is, when dispensations seemeth to contradict the truth of the promises: the promise it speaketh one thing, and dispensations seem to speak another: and this is the occasion that oftentimes Christians cry out, *Doth his promise fail for evermore?* This is clear from the practise of David? 1 Sam. 27. 1. when dispensations were upon the top of the accomplishment, and truth of the promises, then misbeliet it ariseth as a champion mighty to war, and cryeth out, *I shall one day fall by the hand of Saul:* And we conceive, that dispensations contradicting the truth of the promises, was the occasion of his speaking that word, Psal. 116. 11. *I said in my haste, all men are liars.* And I would only say to you that dispute the truth of the promises upon this account that dispensations contradicteth them, do but consider this: God in his way is not like unto you. Would ye know the time when the promises are nearest their accomplishment? It is then when we can least see that they are to be accomplished: the promises are never nearer their performance, then when we think they are furthest off from it: And therefore let the faith of the Omnipotency of God uphold your spirit under such a debate, then let dispensations speak what they will, ye may answer all with this, *There is nothing too hard for him.* I grant, this may try the strength of the strongest faith; yea, we find it hath made the best to stagger when they had no probabilities to tell them that

the promises shall be accomplished : this was the ground of *Sarahs* misbelief, *Gen.* 18. 12. that when she heard she should bear a son in her old age, she laughed within her self, and did, as it were, mock at such a promise : and this was the ground of *Moses* his unbelief, *Num.* 11. 21. 22. he did not see a probability that such a multitude could be fed with flesh, and therefore he did call in question the truth of that promise. This was the ground of the misbelief of that Lord that is made mention, *2 Kings* 7. 2. and this was the ground of *Zecharies* misbelief, *Luke* 1. 20. But I would only say to you that do so much consult with probability in the exercise of your faith, these two things. 1. There is nothing too hard for God, this was the very argument that God took to convince *Sarahs* in the 14. verse of that 18. chapter : *Is there any thing too hard for God ?* And 2. Faith is never in its native and spiritual exercise, till once probabilities contradict the truth of the promise ; then faith it is put upon the stage, and then faith doth act : but as long as faith and probabilities think one thing, then the day of the tryal of the strength of faith, is not yet come.

The second ground upon which Christians dispute the accomplishment of the promises, is their much disputing of their interest in God. Sometimes a Christian will believe a promise, and before the accomplishment of the promise come, their hope will be darkned, their interest in Christ will be obscured, and then do they quite their faith in adhering to the truth of that promise.

mise. These two are joyned together, want of the faith of our interest, and want of faith of the accomplishment of the promise; as is clear from that word, Psalm 77. vers. 8. *Is his mercies clean gone?* There is disputing of his interest, and presently this is subjoyned, *Doth his promise fail for evermore?* Except a Christian can read his name in the ancient records of Heaven, and can seal the conclusion, *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine*, it will be a hard and difficult task for him if not impossible, to believe the promise.

The fourth ground of a Christians disputing the truth of the promises, is their mistaking the way how the promises are accomplished: there are some that suppose, that when ever they close with a promise by faith, there is no more but to enter to the possession of such a promise: but do not mistake it, betwixt your believing the promise and the accomplishment of it, there may be sad and dark days interveening, according to that word in *Mark* 10 30. where Christ passing great promises to his disciples, he, as it were, doth adde, do not mistake me that ye shall have these promises without trouble and affliction, *Ye shall receive*, saith he, *an hundred fold in this life with persecutions*. A Christian when he believeth the promises, he must resolve to have a Winter before the Spring-time come; wherein the promises shall bud and flourish.

The fifth ground of a Christian disputing the truth of the promises, is, when the promises are long in their accomplishing. A Christian when

first he meeteth with a promise, he will cry forth *O, I believe*; but when time is taken for the accomplishment of it, then his faith beginneth to faint, and his hope beginneth to languish and give over; yea, sometimes Christians they fall into this fault, when they believe a promise, they fix a day for the accomplishment of it, which if God do not keep, but go over, then they immediately cry forth, *What is my strength that I should wait, and what is my confidence that I should prolong my days?* This is clear in the practise of *Abraham*, where the promise of having a numerous seed being given to him, *Genes. 12. 2.* the long time before that promise was accomplished in part to him, was the occasion of his unbelief, that he vented, *Gen. 15. 3. O Lord, what wilt thou give me since I go childless?* But ye must know, that before the vision shall speak, there is an appointed time that ye must wait, according to *1 Pet. 5. 9. 10. After ye have suffered a while*, then the promises shall be accomplished, and ye shall be made perfect.

The sixth ground upon which Christians call in question the accomplishment of the promises, is, The consideration of the greatness of the thing that is promised, when they compare it with their own worth and deserving, then they begin to dispute, *O shall such a thing be? Shall unworthy I, shall sinful I, shall self-destroying I, shall I that am less then the least of all his mercies, receive the accomplishment of such a mercy?* This we may suppose was one ground of *Abraham's* misbelief.

Genes. 17. 18. when he cried forth at that same time, when the Lord was giving him the excellent promise of an *Isaac*. Oh, that *Ishmael* might live! He thought an *Isaac* such an excellent mercy, that he could not without presumption, expect the accomplishment of that promise. And in *Zech. 8. 6.* this was the ground of their misbelief, which God doth sweetly obviate. *If it be wonderfull in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these dayes, should it also be wonderfull in mine?*

The last ground upon which Christians dispute the accomplishment of the promises, is, When in the time between their believing and the accomplishment of the promise, they fall into some gross iniquity, this maketh them exceedingly debate whether the promise shall be accomplished unto them; for since they have transgressed the Covenant of God, and have broken their purposes and resolutions, they cannot suppose God will abide faithful to them, and once accomplish his promises unto them; and the only way how to answer this dispute, is, to look to the faithfulness of God, and use that word, *2 Tim. 2. 13.* *Though we believe not, yet God doth abide faithful, he cannot deny himself.*

And now to shut up this second duty that we press from the unchangeableness of the promises, I shal only say these two words unto you, 1. Assure your selves of this, that these accomplishments of the promises that come not through the lively exercise of faith doth loose much of their sweetness, much of their luster, and much of their advantage:

vantage: sometimes a promise will be accomplished unto a Christian, when he hath not been much in the constant lively exercise of faith in believing such a promise; but then the disadvantage that attendeth such a one, are not easily expressed. How often may he cry out, *The Lord was in this place, & I was not aware?* How little of God doth he see in it? How short is he in praises and rendering to the Lord, according to the good he hath received? How negligent in improving or keeping the mercy, and how loath to lay it out for God, when he saith, *The Lord hath need of it?* and many things more of this kind, which may press us to be steadfast in believing. And 2. O dispute less, and believe more: what profit shal ye have of your disputings? and if ye would produce all your strong arguments why ye should not believe the promises, ye may drown them in this immense depth, God is unchangeable. Let me say but this further, There are three most remarkable changes in a Christian, in his making use of the promises: First, sometimes he will believe the promises and make application of them, and ere many hours go about, he will misbelieve that promise which presently he believed. Will not sometime a Christian in the morning cry out, *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine,* and ere twelve hours come, they will change their note, and cry out, *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord?* Sometimes a Christian in the morning will cry, *My mountain standeth strong, I shall never be moved,* and ere many hours go about, he will change

his note, and cry out, *Thou hast hid thy face from me, and I was troubled.* Secondly, sometimes a promise will be to a Christian *sweeter then the honey and the honey comb.* Sometimes a Christian would die and live upon the promise: Sometimes the believing of a promise will be to a Christian *as the valley of Acher for a door of hope*, that will make him to sing, & yet ere many days go about, he may come to the same very promise, and it will prove tasteless to him as the *white of an egge*; so that he may cry out, *O that it were with me as in the moneths past, and in the ancient times*: And, O where is the sweetness that I found in such a promise? O it is gone, it is gone, and I am left desolat! Thirdly, Sometimes when a Christian will be believing such a promise; and resting upon it, he will (through the Spirit of the Lord) see much light & clearness in that promise, he will take up the deep things of God that shineth therein; and at another time he may come to that same promise, & it may be dark to him, so that his light hath vanished: and sometimes the joy of a Christian in the promise will be gone, when his light that he had in it, may remain with him. A Christian may come to the promise, and find his ancient light, yet not his ancient joy, nor his ancient delight. Therefore if ye would have the promises alwayes sweet unto you, pray over them, pray that God might breath upon such a promise, and make it lively unto you.

The third thing that we would press upon you from the unchangeableness of the promises, is that which by proportion ye may gather even

from this, that the threatnings of God are *unchangeable*: these two are conjoined: yea, *Joshua* seemeth to infer the unchangeableness of the threatnings from the unchangeableness of the promises, *Chap 23. 14.* compared with *verse 15.* and these are conjoined, *Zech. 8. 14. 15.* *That as I thought to punish you, and it hath come to pass, so I have thought to build you up, and it shal come to pass.* And I would from this desire you to stand in awe, lest you come under the lash of the unchangeable threatnings of God; for know, that as God is unchangeable in the promises, and there is not one word in all the everlasting covenant that shal not be accomplished; so likewise know, there is not a curse in all the Book of the Covenant, but it shall be accomplished in its time: And know this likewise, that the day is coming when that sad word thars in *Hos. 7. 12.* shall be accomplished, *I will chastise them as their Congregation hath heard.* And, O ye that live in this place, if all the threatnings that your Congregations hath heard, shal be accomplished in their time, ye may take up the last words of *Balaams* song, alas! *Who shall live when God shal do these things.* And therefore since the threatnings of God are unchangeable, as also the promises life and death is set before you; and either ye shall be the object of the unchangeable threatnings of God, or ye must be the object of the unchangeable promises of God: And therefore I would from this charge you, that as you would not be helpful to the destruction of your immortal Souls, you would not undervalue the threatnings

nings that ye hear in your Congregations, since there is a declaration past, that the threatnings in your Congregations shal be accomplished.

Now there is that fourth duty that we would perss upon you from this, that the promises are unchangeable, have an unchangeable love to the *Promiser*, let this commend the *Promiser*; let this constrain your hearts to delight in the *Promiser*. O what a blessed dispensation of love is this, that an unchangeable God should make unchangeable promises unto changeable creatures. If the promise of the covenant of Grace were as changeable in their nature as we are changeable, there should not one of us go to Heaven: but know, it is the blessed design of love, and it hath been a blessed practise of the infinite wisdom of God, that when he hath to do with changeable creatures, he will give them unchangeable promises. And I would once invite you again, that ye would come near and imbrace this *unchangeable Promiser*. I shall speak these five words that may perswade you. First, Christ is easily to be gotten if ye will take him, ye will get Christ if ye will but hear, yea, for one listening of your ear to his voice ye shall get him: according to that word *Isai. 55. 3. Hear, and what of that? and your soul shal live.* Is not this to get Christ at an easie rate; and as we spake before, ye will get Christ for a look, and is not that an easie rate; *Isai. 45. 22. Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth and be saved:* Have ye a desire to take Christ, ye shall get him for that desire, according to that word, *Isa. 55. 1. Ho, every one that thirsteth, let him come, and he that wills let him come:* will

ye but consent for to take him, ye shall have him, and what can you have at a lower rate then this? Shall never your cursed hands take the pen and put to your name to the blessed contract of marriage? Shall never these cursed hearts of ours cry forth, *Even so I take him*, and do promise to live to him, and to die to him. O strange! will ye not do it? Upon what terms would the World have Christ, is it possible to have him without a consent to take him? Oh, if ye would but open to him, he would condescend to come in unto you, and to sup with you, and ye with him: do ye but stir to open, Christ hath the keyes in his hand, and he will help you to open. O what if Christ the precious Gift of Heaven, the eternal admiration of Angels, that branch of righteousness, shall be despised, being offered upon so easie terms: then cursed eternally shal be that person that thus undervalueth Christ, it had been better for him that he had never been born: Cursed shall you be in your birth, and in your life, and in your death: all the curses of the persons of the Trinity will light upon you, yea believe it. O wife, that hath a believing husband, in the day that the great sentence of eternal excommunication from the presence of the Lord, shall be past against the undervaluers of Christ, a believing husband will say Amen, to that sentence, even to his wife, that did thus undervalue that noble Plant of renown: and the wife upon the other part, will say with hearty consent Amen, to that sentence against the unbelieving husband, and the father to the son, and the son to the father.

Now there is this fifth duty that we would press upon you from this, that the promises are unchangeable, that ye would be perswaded to make the promises your portion and your inheritance; What can ye want that will choise the promises for your portion? I know our cursed eyes doth not love to make invisible promises, and that invisible crown, and an invisible God our portion, we love to walk by sight, not by faith. But oh, if you knew once what it were but to claim a relation to Christ! Did ye once know what it were to have but Christ a moment between your breasts, ye would cry forth, *O! who would not love him that is the King of Saints?* who would not be content to quite all things, that they might get Christ that noble pearl of price?

And there is this last duty that we would press upon you from this, that the promises are unchangeable, read a lecture from off this, O Christian? even your misbelief, God hath confirmed his everlasting Covenant with an oath, with the blood of his son by the two great broad seals of heaven, the sacrament of baptism and the Lords supper. And what doth all these confirmations speak, but our dreadful misbelief, & that we know not what it is to be resting on a naked word of promise? I shal say no more, but desire that ye would consider and take notice of these three. First, ye have been solemnly and often invited by the Ambassadors of Christ, to close with him, and to take him for your Husband and your Lord, and will you consider presently, that all the Angels in Heaven, and all that are about the Throne, and the three

most glorious, most blessed Persons of the Trinity, that they are witnesses, and shall be to your dissent. And are there not many here whose hearts could never be brought up to give a hearty consent to close with Christ that is the great Promiser, and who hath laid all the bonds that heaven or earth could contrive to gain sinners hearts unto himself. O precious Christ! what could he do to perswade us to love him which he hath not done? and yet that may be your name, which is in *Eph. 2. 2. Children of disobedience*, or as the word is, *Children of impiety*, we cannot be perswaded. Secondly, I fear if Christ himself would come from heaven and invite you, and say, Here am I, embrace me, there are some here who would close not only their eyes, but their ears: they would close their eyes lest the beauty of Christ should allure them, they would close their cursed earr, lest they should be gained and captivate by the sweet enchanting voice of that blessed Charmer, when he should charm so wisely. And lastly, Wilt thou tell me, O Christian and expectant of Heaven, what a day shall it be when all the unchangeable promises of God shall be accomplished? What a day shall it be when that promise shall be accomplished, *Ye shall see him as he is*? What a day shall it be, when that promise shall be accomplished, *Ye shall be made like unto him*? What a day shall it be when that promise shall be accomplished, *Ye shall know as ye are known*? O are ye not longing for the day of the full accomplishment of the precious promises of God, when ye shall sit down and comfort your selves in the eternal and

unspeakable fruition of them? O let us long and wait till the day shall be when that voice shall be heard in Heaven, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him. O how unwilling are we to leave a World! And how gladly would we take up our rest on this side of Jordan! I think it this were the night that that blessed voice were to be heard in Heaven. Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him: some, if not many of the Christians (that are so indeed) in this time, would cry forth, Oh spare a little, that we may recover strength, before we go hence and shall be no more. Are ye not longing to bring the King over Jordan, and to bring him home to your left, and to have your heart brought home to him? O blessed, blessed are these that are above: Is not the voice of these that shout for victory heard amongst them? Is not the voice of these that sing for joy heard amongst them? Job doth not now any more complain, Why dost thou make me to possess the iniquity of my youth, and setteth a print upon my heels? David doth now no more complain, Why doth thy promise fail for evermore? But rather doth sweetly sing How is thy promise fulfilled for evermore! Heman doth now no more complain, While I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted; but rather cryeth out, While I feel thy comforts, I am ravished. The voice of mourning is now sweetly gone away, and the voice of Hallelujah, and of eternal praising of him that sitteth upon the Throne, is now heard in the place of it. O such a day, that shal never admit of a following night. Now to him that is upon his way, that will come,

and shal come, and shal not tarry, we desire to give praile.

S E R M O N V.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Wher. by are given unto us exceeding great & precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the World through lust.*

T Here are three cardinal & excellent graces that are exercised and taken up with the precious promises: there is the excellent grace of faith, that believeth the truth and the goodness of the promise: there is the precious grace of hope, that with patience waiteth for the accomplishment of the promise, and doth stay until the vision speak: and that noble grace of love, that loveth the thing that is promised, and taketh exceeding much delight in the Promiser. If we may be allowed to speak so, we think these strange revolutions & times we live in, are another *Ecclesiastes*; which doth fully preach forth the vanity and emptiness of all things that are here below God. And we do indeed conceive, that it is the great design of God in the darkning of our pleasant things, and in making every gourd to wither, under the shadow of which we use to repose our self, and in famishing all the Gods of the earth, to bring his own to delight themselves in this invisible treasure, the promises of the everlasting Covenant, and in him who is the substance of them; and that since all things else are declared to be vanity, we might choise these as our portion for ever.

At the last occasion that we spake upon these words, we were speaking unto the properties of the promises; and we told you that there were four of them holden forth. 1. *The freedom of the promises.* 2. *The unchangeableness of the promises:* of which two we have spoken unto you; and now there remains other two to be spoken to, to wit, that the promises they are *exceeding great*, and that they are *exceeding precious*, a sweet and excellent, though a rare conjunction, greatness and goodness here kissing one another, preciousness and highness linked together by the bond of Union. And we shall speak unto these two properties together, and shall clear a little this thing, in what respects the promises of the Covenant may be called exceeding great and precious: And we conceive in short, they may be called so in these eight respects. First, they are exceeding great, in respect of the great price that was laid down to purchase them, there not being a promise of the everlasting Covenant, above the head of which this may not be engraven in great letters, *Here is the price and purchase of blood*: And no doubt, this ought highly to commend the promises, that they are bought at so infinite a rate. Must they not be great and precious things that so wise a Merchant did lay down so infinite a Treasure for the purchasing of them? 2. They may be called exceeding great & precious, in respect of those great and precious things that are promised in them. Is not godliness a great thing, and this is within the bosom of a promise? Is not Heaven and eternal enjoyment of God a great and precious thing?

and yet this lyeth within the bosom of a promise; Is not the knowing of God as he is, our perfect conformity with God, our victory over our Idols, great and excellent things? and yet all these are treasured up in the promises. 3. They may be called exceeding great and precious, in respect of the great advantage that redounds to a Christian through the enjoyment of them: the promises of the everlasting Covenant, (if so we may speak) are the Pensils that draws the draughts and lineaments of the Image of Christ upon the soul: it is the promises of the everlasting covenant *by which we are changed from glory to glory: as it were by the Spirit of the Lord*: and as *Peter* doth here speak, the promises are such things whereby we are made *partakers of the divine nature*. 4. They may be called exceeding precious, in respect of that near relation that they have unto Jesus Christ, what are all the promises of the covenant of grace? Are they not precious streams and rivulets that flow from Jesus Christ? Christ is the fountain, out of which all these promises do spring: And can this fountain that is sweet in it self, send forth any bitter waters? Must they not be precious things that hath such a noble descent, as to be streams of love flowing out from the Father to the Son, and from him unto us, as the powring out of the ointment upon the head of *Aaron*, which ran down the beard unto the skirts of his garments. 5. They may be called exceeding precious promises, in respect they, or rather Christ in them, are the object of precious faith. What is the meat upon which faith doth feed? Is it not upon the promises

of the Covenant, and Christ the kernil of them? What are these things that saith taketh so much delight in, and is supported by? Is it not the promises of the Covenant? 6. They may be called exceeding precious, in that they are the things that guideth and leadeth us to precious Christ. There is not a promise within the book of the covenant, but, as it were, it cryeth forth with a loud voice, *O come to Christ*. The promises are indeed that Star that leadeth us unto the House where Christ doth ly, and there is no access unto Jesus Christ, but by a promise: Christ is to be found there: for he dwells within the bounds of the everlasting covenant, and there he will tryft with his people, and be found of them. And, 7. they may be called exceeding precious, in respect that the Saints have found such sweetness, and such unspeakable delight in the promises. Did not David find a great sweetness in the promises, when he cried forth, *The words of thy mouth are better to me, then thousands of gold and silver*? Did he not find much sweetness in the promises, when he was constrained to cry out, *Thy law is sweeter unto me then the honey and the honey comb* David in a manner, was put to a *non plus*, to find out any suitable similitude and significant resemblance, to point out the sweetness of the promises: Though we may say the Christians of this time are in a perpetual fever, they have lost their spiritual taste, so that they may say, if me may allude unto that word, 2 Sam. 19:25. *I am this day fourscore years old, and cannot discern betwixt good and evil: can*
thy

thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? They know not what it is to be overcome with the sweetness that is to be found in these excellent streams of divine consolation. Lastly, the promises may be called exceeding precious, in that the Saints have a high & matchless account of them. Hence that word is here rendred *precious*, may likewise be rendred *honourable*, which speaketh forth that there is nothing that hath so much of the esteem of a Christian as the promises. Would ye put wisdom, or riches, or honor, or what ye will in the ballance with the promises, they would cry forth, What should I profit to gain all these, if I lose the promises? We shall say no more of this, but that the promises are indeed that apple, the eating of which, would make us, in some respect (and in humility be it spoken) as God, *knowing good and evil*. The promises are these things that doth elevate the soul unto a Divine conformity with God. And, oh! that this might be the fruit of them! The promises are as cords let down to souls sinking in the myrie clay, and in the horrible pit: do but lay hold upon them, and ye shall undoubtedly be drawn up, and he shall set your feet upon the rock, and order all your goings.

Now we come to speak of the third thing in the words, which is the advantage and unspeakable gain that floweth to a Christian through the promises, holden forth in these words, that by them ye might be made partakers of the Divine nature; which words doth nor hold forth that there is any substantial change of our natures into the essence

of God : but only it holds forth this, that the soul that is taken up in believing of the promises, doth arise unto a likeness and conformity to him in holiness, wisdom and righteousness. And as these advantages that come to a Christian through the promises: 1. We must lay this for a ground, that the fruit of all cometh to him through believing the promises, and in making application of them.

And the first is, that they do exceedingly help and promote that excellent and necessary work of mortification: this is clear from the words of the Text; As likewise from 2 Cor. 7. 1. *Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.* And the influence that the promises have upon sanctification, may be shown unto you in these three. First, They lay upon a Christian a Divine bond and obligation to study holiness, that since Christ hath signified and testified his respects unto us, in so ample and large a way, as to give such precious promises, we ought to endeavour to study holiness, which is that great reward of love that he seeketh from us for all things that he hath bestowed, and we receive, and this is the meaning of that, 2 Cor. 7. 1. Secondly, The strength and furniture of a Christian for fulfilling and accomplishing of the work of Sanctification lyeth within the promises: are not the promises of God unto a Christian, as Samsons locks, in which their great strength doth ly? and if once they cut themselves off from the promises through misbelief, their

their strength doth decay, and they become as other men. Where must the Christian go to for strength? Is it not to the promise? Is it not to the Name of the Lord? Yea, this is the strength of a Christian unto which he must resort continually. And thirdly, the promises of God they hold forth that unspeakable reward that attendeth that Christian that shall study holiness. There are several promises of the everlasting Covenant, that cryeth forth to the Christian, to him that overcometh will this promise be accomplished, to him that overcometh shall this truth be fulfilled, and this doth exceedingly provoke a Christian to wrestle with all his discouragements he meeteth with in the way: he burieth his anxieties within the circle of his immortal Crown, he hopeth for, & seeth in the promise, and hope maketh him dispenſe with his wants, his expectation maketh him overcome his fears, and his looked for joy maketh him to dispenſe with his sorrows.

The second advantage is, that the faith of the promises do help a Christian to a spiritual and heavenly performance of the duty of prayer, and withal maketh him delight in the performance of it: this is clear from 2 Sam. 7. 27. where David believing the promises, it is subjoyned, *He found in his heart to pray that prayer to God*; and if any will look unto the words of that prayer, they will see them running in a heavenly and spiritual strain, speaking to him as one much acquainted with God, and under most high and majestic apprehensions of his glory, as is clear also, Psal. 119.

147. I prevented the dawning of the morning and cried; as if David had said, would you know what made me thus fervent and diligent in prayer, it was that I hoped in his word; and hence it is, that he hath so many prayers in that *Psalms*, all were occasioned through the faith of the promises; as for instance, when he cried forth, *quicken me according to thy word be merciful unto me according to thy word.* And we conceive, the faith of the promises helpeth a Christian in his prayer, to these four Divine ingredients of that duty. 1. It maketh him pray with faith: when once he buildth his prayer upon the promises, then he venteth his prayer with much confidence of hope? according to that word, *Psalms 65 3.* where ye may see a man believing and praying when he is believing, and expressing his confidence most strangely in these words, *As for our transgressions thou shalt purge them away,* it is not said *thou wilt purge them away*, or we desire that thou should purge them away, *but thou shalt*, which speaketh forth both the confidence of faith, and the boldness of faith: a Christian that believeth the promises, he can take the promise in his hand and present it unto God, and say, fulfill this promise since thou wilt not deny thy Name, but art faithful. 2. It maketh a Christian pray with much humility, for when he doth understand that there is nothing that he hath but it is the fruit and accomplishment of a promise: he doth not boast as those that have not received, but walketh humbly under his enjoyments: this is clear, *Gen. 32. 10.* where we

may see *Jacob* speaking to God with much humility, and in the 9. verse, he is speaking to God with much faith. And 3. it maketh a Christian pray with much love: would you know the great ground that we are so remiss in the exercise of love and prayer, it is, because we build not our prayers upon the promises. And 4. it helpeth a Christian to pray with much fervency; when was it that *David* cryed to God? was it not when he was believing the promise that was past to him of old? we would not plead with God with such remissness, if we did believe the promises that are within the Covenant.

The third advantage is, that the faith of the promises doth sometimes uphold a Christian under his spiritual deserrions and tentations. Is it not certain, that sometimes he hath been ready to draw that conclusion, I am cast out of his sight, and shall no more behold him in the land of the living? when a promise that hath been born in upon his spirit hath supported him, and made him to change his song, and to invert his conclusion. This is clear from *Psal. 94. 18.* when I said, *my foot slip-peth*, there is the conclusion of misbelief and despair, yet *thy mercie, O Lord, did hold me up*, there is the gate at which Faith doth bring in consolation, not from bygone experience only; but certainly from that which he found in some precious promises that was born in upon his spirit: Many excellent cords of love hath Christ let down unto a soul, when they have been going down into the depths, and the weeds have been wrapt about their

their heads : It is clear likewise from Psalm 119. 18. *My soul sainteth for thy salvation* : as if David had said , I am in hazard to give over my hope, and to break my confidence : and would ye know what it was that supported me under such an estate ? *I hoped in thy word* : hath not this oftentimes been the song of a Christian in their darkest night , *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts do delight my soul*. Faith will see a morning approaching in the time of the greatest trouble ; and no doubt, that promise that upholdeth a Christian in their doubting and misbelieving condition, the lively impressions of that promise will remain a long time with him ; and when first it is born in upon their spirits , they will see no small love shining forth in carving out such a promise to suit with such a providence, as they are (it may be) meeting with for the time.

The fourth advantage in believing the promises , is , that thereby we have an excellent help to patience and divine submission under our saddest outward afflictions : This is clear from Psal. 27. 13. *I had fainted , unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living* : and from Psalm 119. 49. 50. where David telling his exercise in the 49. *I hope , saith he , in thy word* ; immediately he subjoyneth, *This is my comfort in mine affliction* ; as if he had said, If I had not had the promises to be my comforters ; I had sit alone and kept silence, and should have remained without comfort in the day of my adversity : and verse 92. *Unless thy law had been my delight , I should have*

have perished in my afflictions : and we conceive
 short, the influence which faith upon the promi
 hath upon the patient bearing of the cross, may
 shown unto you in these two particulars. First
 Faith it is an excellent prophet, that always pro
 pheseth unto us good things : Would ye enquire
 at Faith at your midnight of affliction, what is
 its opinion of God and of your own state ; Faith
 would sweetly resolve you thus, *Wait on God. for*
I shall yet praise him for the health of his counte-
nance. Faith knoweth not what it is to have wrong
 constructions of God ; and therefore it is the no
 ble interpreter of a Christians cross : If sense, rea
 son, and misbelief interpret your cross, they will
 make you cry out unto God, *Why art thou become*
unto me as an enemy, or as a liar, and waters that
fail ? But if faith that noble interpreter do inter
 prer your crosses, it will make you cry out, *I know*
the thoughts of his heart, that they are the thoughts of
peace, and not of evil, to give me an expected end.
 Faith letteth a Christian see a blessed outgate and
 issue of all the sad dispensations that he meeteth
 with. Faith, that is its divinity, I sow in tears, but
 I shal reap in joy : *Weeping may be at evening, saith*
Faith, but joy shal come in the morning. Secondly,
 it affordeth unto a Christian such soul-refreshing
 consolation in the midst of their afflictions, that
 in a manner, they forget their sorrows, as waters
 that pass away. This David doth divinely assert, in
 Psal. 119. 50. *This is my comfort in mine affliction.*
 The Faith of the promises are indeed that Tree
 which if they be cast into the waters of Marah, they

they will make them immediately become sweet.

The fifth advantage is, that the faith of the promises doth help a Christian to a greater distance with the world, and to live as a pilgrim; as is clear from Heb. 11. 13. where these two are sweetly linked together, the embracing of the promises by Faith, and confessing that they were *strangers and pilgrims here on Earth*. And we shal show the influence that Faith hath upon this, in these three.

1. It maketh a Christian see the end of all perfection here, and that there is nothing within the Globe of the World *that is not vanity and vexation of spirit*. Faith is that prospect through which a Christian hath most clear discoveries of the vanity of all things, and this doth exceedingly help him to live as a pilgrim. 2. It letteth a Christian see the endless perfections of heaven, and bringeth it within sight of that immense and everlasting hope: and this maketh him to live as a pilgrim, and to declare plainly *that he seeketh a Country*. And 3. it doth exceedingly help him forward in that blessed work of weaning of affections from all things that are here: Would ye know where a believers heart is? It is in Heaven. Would ye know where his thoughts are? They are in Heaven. Would ye know where his conversation is? It is in Heaven. Would ye know where his hope is? It is in Heaven, his treasure is in Heaven, and therefore his heart and conversation is there, and *Christ in him is the hope of glory*. And indeed more faith of the promises, would constrain us all to subscribe that confession of faith that is in Heb. 11. 13.

The sixth advantage that attendeth the believing of the promises, is, that it is the mother of much spiritual joy and divine consolation, and maketh a Christian to be much in the exercise of praise; this is clear from *Psal. 71. 14.* *But I will hope continually, and then immediately is subjoynd, and will yet praise him more and more.* As likewise from *Rom. 15. 13.* and from *1 Pet. 1. 8.* If a man would have his way to Heaven made pleasant, and while they are sitting by the rivers of *Babel*, would be admitted to sing one of the songs of *Zion*, then ought they to believe the promises, and to choose them as their heritage for ever: and then he may sing in hope, and praise in expectation, though he have but little in hand for the present: indeed, when he looketh to his possession, there will not be so much matter of rejoycing; but when he looketh upon his hopes and his expectations, he may be constrained to cry forth, *Awake up, O my glory; I my self will awake early.*

The seventh advantage, is, that the faith of the promises is a notable mean to attain unto spiritual life: this is clear from *Isa. 38. 16.* *By these things, saith Ezekiah, do men live* (speaking of the promises) *and in all these things is the life of my spirit.* As likewise from *Psal. 119. 50.* *Thy words, saith David, hath quickned me.* O what spiritual and divine life doth attend that Christian that is much in the exercise of Faith upon the promises: and what is the great occasion that our hearts are oftentimes dying within us like a stone, and we are like unto those that are free amongst the dead?

it not because we do not make use of the promises.

Eighthly, There is that advantage, that faith of the promises, it maketh a Christian have an esteem of the thing that is promised. What is the reason that we write this above the head of the great things of the everlasting Covenant, this is a *Zoar*, a little one? Is it not because we do not believe? great things sometimes to us have no beauty, and there is no comeliness that appeareth in them, why they should be desired: but if we had so much faith as a *grain of mustard seed*, we would cry forth, how excellent are these things that are purchased to the Saints, and how eternally are they made up that have a right but to one line of the everlasting covenant, *that it is well ordered in all things & sure.*

And ninthly, The faith of the promises is the door at which the accomplishment of the promises doth enter in: according to that word, *Luke 1. 45. Blessed are they that believe, for there shal be a performance of these things that are spoken of the Lord unto them.* If we were more in waiting for the accomplishment of the promises, *The vision should speak and should not tarry;* And no doubt, a mercy coming to us as the fruit and performance of a promise, will make it an exceedingly refreshful thing: When a Christian getteth leave to sing that song which is in *Isai. 25. 9. Lo this is our God, we have waited for him, he will come and save us:* And when a mercy is the fruit and accomplishment of the promise, there is a beautiful luster and dye upon that mercy, which no art could set on, but only the finger of the love of God. The smallest mer-

cy then becometh a matchless mystery of love, and the most matchless mysteries of love without the exercise of faith, they become as things that are contemptible in our eyes, and we do not value nor praise them. Faith maketh our thoughts to ascend, and misbelief maketh our thoughts to descend, in relation to the precious mercies of heaven.

Lastly, Besides all these advantages, We have these two mentioned in the Text. 1. That by them we are made partakers of the divine nature, and are brought up unto that blessed conformity with God, which we had lost in the fall. 2. That by them we escape the corruption in the World through lust. I intend not particularly to open up the nature of these things at this time, because I am only to speak to the exercise of Faith in the promises. But O what excellent mercies are these, to get on the beauty of the Image of God, and to get off these ugly defilements which were the image of Satan upon our souls. O how should this commend the promises unto us, that by faith in them we do all behold with open face, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as it were by the Spirit of the Lord.

Now that which secondly, we shal speak to, shal be the advantages that results to a Christian from a spiritual observation of the Lords accomplishing his promises; for here ye see in the Text, the Apostle maketh an observation of these excellent things that are the fruit of these precious promises, when they are accomplished. And the first advantage

advantage is, That it stampeth the soul of a Believer with most divine impressions of love: this is clear, *Isai. 38. 15.* where *Hizekiah* cryeth out, *What shal I say, he hath both spoken it, and himself hath done it,* being, as it were, astonished and overcome with the apprehensions of the condescendency of God, he is put to a non plus, and to what shal I say, *Psalme 48. 8. 9.* As we have heard (saith David) so have we seen in the City of the Lord of hosts, that is, according to his promise, we have had suitable performance: and he subjoyneth, ver. 9. that which was both their exercise and their advantage, *We have thought of thy loving kindness, O God in the midst of thy Temple,* as it were the observation of the performance of the promise, made their thoughts wholly to be taken up with the love of God: and no doubt, there is more love in performing one promise, then eternity were sufficient to make a commentary upon. It is one wonder of condescendency, that God should oblige and bind himself to us by promises: and another depth of wonderful love, that he should perform these bonds, and answer his words with performance.

The second advantage is, That the observing of accomplishment of promises, doth bring in to the soul new discoveries of God: this is clear, *Exo. 6. 3.* where God thus speaketh to Moses, *I was known* (saith he) *unto Abraham, and unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of the Almighty, but by the name of Jehovah was I not known unto them;* that is, by the Name of giving an accomplishment unto my promises, that Name was not discovered

unto them, but should be made known unto the posterity, in the day when his promises should pass unto performances. And hence it is also, that when the Lord is speaking of the accomplishment of great promises, he do so often in the Scripture, subjoin that word, *Ye shall know that I am Jehovah, or the Lord*, *Isai. 49. 23. 52. and 60. 16.* And indeed, we do daily find it so; for, is not every accomplishment of a promise, a new discovery of the wisdom of God, that shineth in the suitable cyming of the accomplishment of a promise? Is not every accomplishment of a promise a new discovery of the faithfulness of God, that he will not alter that which hath gone out of his mouth? And is not every performance of the promises a new discovery of the love of God, that he desireth to magnify his mercies above all his works, and a new discovery of the power and omnipotency of God, that can bring forth the performance of his promise, notwithstanding of all things that are in the way; yea, *make things that are not to be, and bring to nought things that are?*

The third advantage is, That it helpeth a Christian to have high apprehensions, and majestic up-takings of God: this is clear, *1 Tim. 1. 15.* compared with vers. 17. where Paul closing with that promise; that *Christ came into the World to save sinners*, and beholding in the accomplishing of it, in himself, his heart (as it were) is elevated within him, and he cryeth forth, *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever, Amen.* There

There is an Emphasis in that word now, as if *Paul* said, I could never praise and extoll him till now, and I am so much bound to Christ, that I will not delay this exercise one moment, now I will bless him: and it is clear from *Micah* 7. 18. where the accomplishment of the promises that are there, made the Church cry out, *Who is like unto thee?* He became matchless unto them through the performance of the promises. And so we conceive, that these who are much in spiritual observation of the performance of the promises, they will see precious draughts of the Majesty of God engraven upon them; so that they will be constrained to cry out, that he above is mighty, and that his Name is *Jehovah*, and in him is everlasting strength, upon which we ought to rely in our greatest straits.

The fourth advantage is, The observing of the accomplishment of the promises, will help a Christian when he is redacted unto new straits, to be much in the exercise of Faith upon God, his former experience will produce hope in his soul; for there is not one discovery of the faithfulness of God, but hath a voyce, and cryeth out, *O believe him*, who is able to give a clear being unto his word: This is clear from *Psalms* 56. at the close, *Thou hast delivered my soul from death*, saith *David*, and then he subjoyneth, *Wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling?* that is, I am certainly perswaded, thou wilt likewise perform that word unto me. And from *Psalms* 37. 2. 3. he giveth that title unto God, vers. 2. that he performeth all things.

things for him, and then he doth subjoyn, *He shall send from Heaven and save me* : and (by the way) the soul that can give God that title and stile, that he performeth all things for them, that soul must of necessity be in a choise and excellent estate : And the point is clear likewise from 2 Corinth. 1. 10. where Paul saith, *God hath delivered me, and he doth deliver me* ; and from hence he draweth that conclusion of faith, *And he will yet deliver me*. We confesse, sometimes our former experiences of the faithfulness of God, they do not support our faith when we are redacted unto new difficulties, which is either occasioned through the greatness of the strait that we are now put to (in our apprehensions) above that which we were put to before ; so that though God did deliver us *when we were running with footmen*, yet we have no faith to believe that he shall deliver us when we are about to contend with horses : or else it is, though the unfaithfulness of our walk, in not answering the precious dispensations of Christ, in accomplishment of his promises, for this maketh us that we cannot with boldness make use of his Word when we are brought into a new strait : a guilty conscience is the mother of misbelief.

The fifth advantage is, That the accomplishment of the promises doth occasion much spiritual joy and rejoycing of his own. We told you the giving of the promises occasioneth joy, and when the promise travellet in birth, and bringeth forth, that occasioneth much more spiritual joy ; this is clear from Psalm 28. 7. *The Lord is*

my strength and my shield, my heart trusteth in him, and I was helped. And he draweth this excellent conclusion from it, Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth, and with my soul will I praise him. And we conceive that sometimes God tryeth the accomplishment of the promises, with some precious manifestation of himself to the soul, which maketh them to rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; but however that is the matter of a spiritual song, That mercy and truth have met together, and righteousness and peace are kissing one another. It is not a pleasant matter of a song to behold love making promises, and to behold faithfulness accomplishing them.

And the last advantage is, That the observation of the accomplishment of promises, doth strengthen a Christians faith in his interest with God; so that now many disputings are silenced, and many questions now are out of the way: this is clear from *Psalm 31. 21. 22.* David confesseth his quarrelling before, but when once the Lord had shewed his marvellous loving kindness in a strong City, then all his quarrel was against himself, because he had quarrelled, and did say in his haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes.

And now we shall only speak a little unto some duties that we would press upon you, from that which we have spoken. And the first duty is, that Christians would be much in waiting for the accomplishment of the promises, and standing upon their watch tower until the vision shall speak: And we shall only give you these things to enforce it, 1. It is his command that ye should so do: this is

clear from *Psalm 27.* at the close, where David presseth that duty much, *Wait on the Lord*, saith he, and if that be not enough, he will repeat the command in the same verse, *Wait, I say, on the Lord*: & no doubt the doubling of it speaketh not only the advantage that is in it, but our difficulty to obey it, and the great necessity that we have to go about it: and that same word it is repeated by David, *Ps. 31. 24.* *Be of good courage*, which is that same, to wait upon the Lord. 2. These that wait patiently for the accomplishment of the promises, God will strengthen them to wait: this is clear from *Psalm 27.* at the close, *Wait on the Lord*, and when we are *Hagar* like casting away the child of hope, he will open our eyes, and give us refreshment, by which we may be supported under our disquietment, *and he shall strengthen thy heart.* And there is this, 3. There shall be a speedy accomplishment of the promises: it is not long before all the mercies that ever the Lord hath promised, and thou hast believed, shall be told down to you; as it were, in one sum, *principal and interest*: as is clear from *Heb. 2. 3.* where he positively asserteth, *That the vision will come, and will not tarry.* There is indeed a pleasant, seeming contradiction in that verse, he had said before, *that the vision would tarry*, and yet here he saith, *the vision will not tarry, but will surely come*: in which ye may see the divinity both of sense and faith, and that noble contradiction that is between their assertions. Sense asserting that the promise doth tarry too long, and Faith crying out, it will surely come, it will not tarry: that is always faiths declaration, which is

set down in 2 Pet. 3.9. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise. 4. Promises that come unto us through the most strong and lively exercise of faith, and that are expected and longed for by us before they come, they are most relishing and sweet: and these mercies come unto us with a binding tye of love: this is somewhat pointed at in Isai. 25.9. where the Church cryeth forth, *Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him; we will be glad and rejoyce in his salvation: their waiting and expecting of the promise to be accomplished in its time, is there the fountain of their song and of their spiritual joy.* I think sometimes a Christian is like that misbelieving Lord, 2 Kings 7.2. *that though they meet with the accomplishment of a promise, yet they do not taste of the sweetness that is in it, because they did not believe the word of the Lord.*

The second duty that we would press from what we have spoken, is, That Christians would close with the promises for their everlasting inheritance, since the promises of the Covenant are exceeding great, and exceeding precious, and the advantage that lyeth in them is unspeakable. O should not these things proclaim aloud unto us, *Close with the promises as your portion for ever.* I think, one that hath a right to the promises, and hath entered himself heir unto that vaste inheritance, he may sometimes rejoyce in that three-fold mystery of the Gospel, that to a natural man can hardly appear other then a contradiction. 1. He may say sometimes, *I have nothing, and yet I possess all things;* for when he looketh unto his

being in the world, he is poor as *Lazarus*, having no place whereon to lay his head; but when he casteth his eye unto his spiritual inheritance, then he beholdeth his treasures & is constrained to cry out, *I possess all things*. 2. Sometimes he may cry forth, *I am rich*, and yet *I am exceeding poor*: he may be rich in hopes, and yet poor in his possessions. There is much of a Christians treasure that lyeth in hope: hope is that thing that will make the Christian sweetly quite all other in comparison of that. That is the motto of the Christian, *spero meliora*, which he holdeth up in his flag, even in the greatest storm, and at length he findeth it true, that hope *maketh not ashamed*. 3. Sometimes the Christian will cry forth, *I am always sorrowing*, and yet *always rejoicing*: when he casteth his eye unto himself, he will sit down and water his couch with tears, but when with the other eye he reflecteth upon Jesus Christ, *He will rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory*: a Christian can both weep and rejoyce at one time, and again he can rejoyce and weep: No doubt, the reflecting upon the immense hope; and that everlasting crown, will make a Christian rejoyce under all his disquietments and anxieties in the World, he can look to the back of time, and behold a glorious inheritance. A Christian hath the eye of an Eagle, that can behold and discern things afar off.

The third duty, that we would press upon you is, To long for the day when all the promises of the Covenant of Grace shall receive their complete accomplishment, and when ye shall be entered into the everlasting fruition of all these

things wherein your blessedness lyeth. There is a threefold come that Christ speaketh of to the soul that is united unto him, all which they sweetly obey. There is that first come, which is in *Matth. 11.28.* *Come unto me all ye that are weary, and heavy laden.* And there is that second come, *Isai. 26.* *Come, my people and enter into the chambers,* which is, to entertain that excellent correspondency with him in troublesome times. And there is a third matchless come, when Christ shal say to his own in the day of their standing before the Tribunal, *Come, O blessed of my Father :* Shal we say it, that if we had *Faith as a grain of mustard seed,* we would cry forth, *Why is his chariot so long a coming?* And did we relish, or made a high account of the matchless promises of the boundless Covenant, we would cry forth, *O that our time would flee away as the ships of desire.* I shall say no more but this, Christ is gone up with a shout unto Heaven, and shal come again with the sound of a trumpet sing praises to God, sing praises, sing praises unto our God, sing praises.

The last thing that we would press upon you, is, that ye would mark the time of the accomplishment of the promises. And as to this, I shall lay but these. 1. That ordinarily the time of the accomplishment of the promises, is the time when sense, reason, and probability, doth most contradict them: this is clear *Ezek. 37.* in the fulfilling of the promises that were past to Judah in their captivity, was it not when they were *as a valley of dead bones,* & their hopes were in a manner cut off for their part, from the 11. vers. of that

chap. compared with the 12. And 2. the time of the accomplishment of the promises, ordinarily is a praying time: this is also clear from *Dan. 9. 2. 3.* and from *Jer. 29. 12.* compared with the 11. verse and the 10. thus saith the Lord, the time when he will visite them, and perform his good word to them, in causing them to return, it shal be a time when they shal call upon me, and shal go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto them. And 3. the time of the accomplishment of his promises, it is a time when our thoughts of the promises are high and large, when once we begin to value our mercies, this is a sign that our mercy is near, and it is bringing forth: However it is our duty to wait on him who can give a being unto his word, and sweetly perform his promises. We ought not to limite infinite wisdom, nor to say unto him that is infinite in strength, *How can such a thing be?* but answer all objections of misbelief with this, God hath spoken it, and he will also do it, and drown all our objections of misbelief in that glorious and mysterious Name of his, *I am that I am.* To him be praise.

S E R M O N V I.

Acts 26. 18. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance amongst them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

When first we did begin our discourse upon the precious and excellent grace

of Faith; We told you that we intended to speak of it under a twofold notion and consideration. First, as it layeth hold upon Christ for justification; and of this we have spoken to you at some length, as ye have heard. Secondly, as it doth hold with Christ for sanctification; and of this we are to speak at this time: and have chosen these words to speak of it; which are a part of that excellent Oration and discourse that *Paul* had before *Agrippa* in his own defence: In which Oration and Discourse of his, ye may behold these four things eminently shining. 1. That Godliness and good manners are not inconsistent, nor contrary one to another: Therefore ye will see in the second and third verses of this Chapter, *Paul* acting the part of a courtly Orator: and believe it, there is more good manners to be learned by being seven dayes in the School of Christ, then by being seven years in all the Courts of *France*. This secondly, That innocent policy that he made use of in the deliverance of this Oration, which likewise doth appear in the second and third verse of this Chapter, where he endeavours to insinuate and ingratiate himself in the favours of the person before whom he had stood. I confess, piety is the best policy, and it is best policy that is taken up in intertaining piety, howbeit true policy may move in one orb and sphere with piety, and the one is not contrary to the other in some case. 3. This shineth in that discourse, even the spiritual boldness *Paul* had in giving an excellent confession of his faith, & the declaring him to be God, even *Jesus Christ* in whom he did believe; *Christ* witnessed a glo-

rious confession before Pontius Pilate for him, and he would witness a glorious confession before Agrippa for Christ, that since Christ had not denied him in that notable day, he would not now deny precious Christ in this day: and this is from the beginning, and all alongs. Lastly, This shineth in the words that Paul doth set forth, the matchless freedome and unspeakable riches of Christ, nor only toward himself, in that he did cast the lot of everlasting love toward him; but likewise toward the *Gentiles*, to whom he was sent as a Preacher, and that he did gloriously condescend to visite the dark places of the earth, and to have the *morning star*, and the *day spring* from on high arising on the habitations of cruelty. And in this verse which we have read, you may behold these five glorious ends of the preaching of this everlasting Gospel, for attaining of which, Ministers are made instruments under God. The first is, to open the eyes of the blind, which in short is even this, to give those that are ignorant of God, the spiritual knowledge of the deep mysteries of the Father, and of the Son: So that from this ye may see that the Gospel hath a kind of omnipotency in producing effects above the power of nature. The second we may see in these words, to *remove them from darkness to light*; which importeth these two: The removing of persons from an estate of misery, unto an estate of excellent joy. 3. The removing of persons from an estate of iniquity, unto an estate of holiness: *darkness* in Scripture pointing out sin, and *light* in Scripture pointing out holiness. 3. The bringing us from

for promoting sanctification.

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under the power of Satan unto God, the making a blessed exchange of captivity and bondage, that these who were under the captivity of Satan, may be under the captivity of love, that those who were under the bondage of sin, may be under the sweet obedience of Christ, whose yoke is easie, and whose burden is light, *Matt. 11. 30. 4.* that persons may receive the remission of sins, and the forgiveness of their iniquity. This is the great voyce of the Gospel, come to a crucified Christ, come to a pardoning Christ, come to a glorified Christ, Christ hath the pardon of iniquity in his one hand, and riches of himself in the other, and these are the great motives by which he studieth to perswade us to come. And the last is in the close of the verse, that persons may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance amongst them which are sanctified by faith that is in me; that is, that they may have a share of that glorious mansion, of that excellent Kingdom that Christ hath purchased, and gone before to prepare. And withal, in this verse, as the words are set down, ye may see the excellent and orderly method that the Gospel keepeth in conquering souls, and you may see these excellent allurements, these perswasive arguments that Christ holdeth forth to conquer you, as it were Christ cometh not unto us cloathed with Robes of Majesty: but cloathed with the Robes of Love and advantage, knowing that in this posture he shal most gain upon our hearts.

Now in speaking unto that last end of the preaching of the Gospel, we shall only according

to our present purpose ; take notice of this one thing from it (not intending to prosecute it as an end of the Gospel) but as it is a property of Faith : and it is that , *Faith in Jesus Christ hath noble and excellent influence upon the growth of sanctification , and the attaining of holiness , they are sanctified*, saith he , *through faith in me*. We shall not stand long to clear this unto you , it is evident from *Acts 15. 9.* where the Apostle telleth us of *purifying their hearts by faith*: And likewise, *1 Tim. 1. 5.* where a pure heart and faith unfeigned, they are joyned and linked together. And likewise *1 John 3. 3.* *Every man that hath this hope in him , he purifieth himself*. All the graces of the Gospel they are linked together by a golden and unseparable chain , so that he that obtaineth one, he shal obtain all ; yea more, all the graces of the Gospel , they have a mutual influence upon one anothers growth , so that we may compare them unto *Hypocrates twains*, of whom it was reported, that they did laugh and weep together , and they did grow together : even so when one grace doth rejoyce, the rest doth rejoyce with it, and when one grace doth mourn , the rest doth mourn with it , and when one grace doth grow, the rest of the graces of the spirit they do likewise grow apace.

There are only three particulars that we shall insist a little upon. First, we shall shew you how faith hath influence upon the attaining of Sanctification, and this we make clear unto you in these respects.

1. In that it discovereth to the soul that match-

less excellency, that transcendent beauty, and that surpassing comeliness that is in Christ, which sight doth exceedingly perswade the soul to draw that conclusion, *What have I to do any more with idols?* A glorious sight of Christ, and acquaintance with him, maketh us to lose our acquaintance with our idols, and when once we are united unto Christ by faith, we break that union that we had with them. And indeed, the want of the knowledge of that excellent comeliness that is in Christ, and of love to him, is the great occasion that the poorest deities and idols in the World taketh up your hearts: did ye but once see him who is that glorious Sun of righteousness, ye would be forced to put in your *Amen*, unto that excellent confession of faith, Eccles. 1. 2. *Vanity of vanities, and all is but vanity, and vexation of spirit.*

2. In that it is the grace that discovers unto a Christian the spotless holiness of Christ. Faith doth not only discover the beauty of Christ, but likewise his holiness, and this doth make the soul fall in love with that excellent thing, *sanctification*. It is recorded amongst the first steps to sin & misery, that we desired to be as Gods, knowing good and evil: but certainly it is amongst the first steps to life and happiness, when the soul desireth to be holy, as he is holy. And I suppose, this is the great ground that ye are not much endeavouring a blessed conformity to God, and to be partakers of the blessed Image of Christ, ye know not the beauty of holiness.

3. Faith layeth hold upon Jesus Christ, and draweth

draweth strength and vertue from him for conquering of our lusts, and in raising us up into blessed conformity unto himself; when the Christian is weak, faith is that noble correspondent between the emptiness that is in us, and the fullness that is in Christ. Faith is that noble correspondent between that weakness that is in us, and that everlasting strength that is in him. Therefore there are two noble and excellent counsels in faith. First, it counsels us not to lean to our own strength. And secondly, to have our recourse unto him, whose Name is Jehovah, that everlasting strength. And no doubt, if we were more taken up in imploying Christ by Faith, that prophesie should be accomplished: *I will make the feeble as David: and David as the Angel of God: And when a Christian is most diffident in himself, then God should prove himself to be Almighty and All-sufficient.*

And 4. Faiths influence may be cleared in this, that it layeth hold upon the promises, and doth believe them: and believing of the promises bringeth forth that noble birth, *conformity to God*, according to that word upon which we were speaking, 2 Pet. 1. 4. by believing the promises, (that is the advantage of it) *We are by them made partakers of the divine nature.*

5. Faith also believeth the threatnings that are past in Scripture against sin, and the believing them hath an undoubted and strong influence upon the attaining and growth of Sanctification. Faith strengtheneth a Christian against the com-

mitting of iniquity with these two words: that word, Rom. 6. 20. O soul (saith faith) commit not iniquity, for the wages of sin is death: and that word, Rev. 21. last, There shall in no way enter into that City, any thing that is unclean, or that committeth iniquity. And be perswaded of it, that the faith of the threatnings and of the promises that are in Scripture, would be as a threefold cord not easily broken, to restrain you from the acting of iniquity: And I shall tell you briefly the ground why these cursed hearts of ours doth commit iniquity with so little fear, and with so much delight, it is even this because we believe not the threatnings of God, which shall be accomplished in their own season: for is it possible that if ye believed that word, Rev. 21. last, That nothing shall enter into the New Jerusalem that defileth or worketh abomination or that maketh a lie; that ye durst for a World adventure upon the committing of iniquity as ye do. And I shall only say to such that do undervalue the threatnings of God, the day is coming when they shall be constrained to cry out, He hath spoken it, and he hath done it, and faithful is he; there is not one jot nor one tittle in the Word of the Lord that shall fall to the ground. And believe it, God will be faithfull in the accomplishment of his threatnings, as he is faithful in the accomplishment of his promises.

6. Faith discovereth unto a Christian the noble excellencies, and those spiritual dignities that are in that everlasting estate that is provided for the Saints in light. Faith (as it were) carrieth up the soul

soul to the top of *Pisgah*, of which it is admitted to behold the *promised land*, and truly the seeing of these noble things that are provided for the Saints, cannot but make them study holiness, since they know that there is an impossibility for one to attain to that estate without holiness, because he hath said it, *Without holiness no man shall see God*. O then if once ye saw heaven, ye would be constrained to walk in the path of Sanctification, since it is the glorious way by which he must walk in thorow the gates of that blessed City. But ye know not the excellency that is there, it is but fancy and notion unto you, and that is the ground that ye do not study to conform your selves unto the blessed Image of God. And I would only ask you this one question, Is it possible that such a delusion as this can overtake you, as to think that ye who never studied holiness on earth, shall yet enter into Heavens gates? I know there are some that say in their heart, *I shall have peace though I walk in the imaginations of mine own heart*: and many more, that suppose that they might fight and overcome, that they may quicke the estate of nature, and be compleat in the estate of grace all in one day. But why will ye deceive yourselves, *Can a nation be born in one day?* or is there but one step between Hell and Heaven? O remember though nothing be impossible with God, yet there was but one Thief saved on the Cross.

7. Faith hath influence upon the attaining holiness, in this respect that it believeth the great

advantages that are promised unto the person that studieth holiness: Faith believeth that word, *Mat. 5. 8. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shal see God.* Faith it layeth hold upon the truth of his excellent sayings, and maketh the Christian endeavour to attain unto a likeness and conformity with him, that so he may be admitted to behold his face for all eternity, and to be made like unto him.

8. Faith discovereth unto Christians the sinfulness of sin, this is never done till once they be in the lively exercise of the grace of Faith. And I will give you these three grounds why faith completely discovereth the sinfulness of sin. 1. Faith letteth us see the person against whom we commit this sin, and that doth exceedingly aggrege sin; for when the Christian is admitted to behold God, and to see that matchless excellency that is in him; then (saith he) what a beast was I to offend such a glorious Majesty as he? What a fool was I to kick against the pricks; or to enter in the lists with such an infinite God? 2. Faith letteth a Christian see these excellent obligations of love that Christ hath imposed upon us. Faith letteth us see the ancient and everlasting love of Christ. Faith is that grace that letteth us see his sufferings. Faith letteth us see all that he hath done for us, and this maketh the Christian cry out, *Do I thus requite the Lord, O foolish one and unwise.* And no doubt, if a Christian were more taken up in the study of this duty, he would be less in contracting debt: and were ye but seriously

taken up in the study of these two great Registers. 1. That Register in which all the infinite acts of love are recorded. And 2. that Register in which all your acts of offending precious Christ are written, ye would be astonished, and ashamed to see so much forgiven you, and durst not sin any more there; ye would see infinite mercy desiring to rejoice over judgement, and there ye would see the spotless riches of that transcendent grace that is Christ. 3. Faith letteth a Christian see the disadvantages of sin, and what woful effects doth follow upon it, and this doth exceedingly hold forth the sinfulness of sin.

The second that we shall speak to concerning faiths influence in the attaining sanctification, shall be to enquire a little into these things that hinder even believers from attaining this blessed effect of their Faith; for some Christians there are that in some respects are taken up in the exercise of Faith, making use of Christ for sanctification, and yet their making use of Christ by faith doth not weaken the strength of their idols (at least) to their apprehensions, neither yet raise them up to a conformity with God: so that they are constrained sometimes to cry out, *I shall once fall by the hand of one of mine iniquities*: and when they fight and doth not overcome, they are at last constrained to say, *There is no hope*.

The first ground of such a dispensation is, that a Christian is not constant in his actings of faith: he will be strong in Faith to day, and when tomorrow cometh, he will faint in that exercise,

this doth exceedingly interrupt the noble victory of Faith: for when faith hath gotten its advantages, they loose them through security and negligence: that is a command that should continually be obeyed, *Trust in the Lord at all times*; and no doubt, if a Christian were more taken up in the constant actings of faith, he should sometimes sing that song, *I trusted in God, and I was helped*.

Secondly, the most part of Christians, they are not strong and vigorous in actings of their Faith; their Faith is exceeding weak, and so they cannot bring forth these noble fruits and effects of Faith; if we were accomplishing the work of Faith with power, and if we were trusting in God with all our hearts, then that promise in *Psal. 37. 5.* should be accomplished to us, *Trust in the Lord, and he shall bring it to pass*. Thirdly, there is a strong heart-conjunction and soul-union between us and our idols: we are joynd to our idols, and therefore we cannot be easily divorced; yea, when we are in the heat of the war against them, there is a procurator within that cryeth, *O spare this little one*, or *this profitable or pleasant one*: and this is ordinarily our practise to spare the choicest of our lusts; so that our *Agaps* may cry forth, *The bitterness of death is past*. But I confess, if that union were once dissolved we should then be heard with greater earnestness to cry forth, *O blessed be the Lord that teacheth my hands to fight*. Fourthly, sometimes a Christian layeth too much weight upon the acting of Faith, and doth not imploy Faith but as an instrument to which Christ must bestow

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strength

strength to conquer. Sometimes we think Faith hath the vertue of overcoming in its own hand: but remember, Faith is but an empty thing without Christ: as ye may see, *Acts 15.9.* where the purifying their hearts by faith, is ascribed to the holy Ghost: so that the activity of faith is from him, and not in its self. Fifthly, a Christian doth not hate sin with a perfect hatred, even in the time of his warfare with his lusts, and with these strong idols that are within him, but there is a secret heart inclination to that very idol which he doth oppose: So that oftentimes there is that twofold contradiction in a Christian; Sometimes his light will cry, Mortify such an idol, and yet his idol will cry; O spare such an idol; yea, more, sometimes, his heart will cry, Mortify such an idol, and yet his heart will cry; O spare such an idol; that is to say, there will be one part of our affection crying one thing, and another part of it will cry another thing: O but there is a remarkable command for the perfect hatred of sin, *Rom. 12.9.* *Abhor that which is evil.* The word in the Original, hate evil as ye would do hell: that is, have perfect hatred to sin. O to hate iniquity as much as Hell, and joyn that word, *Ephes. 5. 11.* *Reprove the unfruitfull works of darkness:* or, as the word may be rendred, *Make out by unanswerable arguments* to your tentations, that you cannot imbrace the unfruitfull works of darkness, convince your temptation that you cannot do it: as we suppose, it was noble arguing of Joseph when he was tempted, *How shal I do this?* he put the temptation (as

were) to it: O temptation! give me one ground why I should commit such an iniquity: and certainly, if we were thus reasoning with our temptations, they should flee before us: but the truth is we embrace the desire of our temptation upon implicit faith. It is a sad regrave, and yet I may utter it, O if men would but deal with God as they do by Satan, we never dispute the promise of Satan, and never examine these allurements he setteth forth, and yet we constantly dispute with God in every thing. Sixthly, a Christian promoteth not in the growth of sanctification, though in some measure exercising faith, because he hath not such a heart to holiness. If we did discover more that excellent beauty, that is, in being clothed with that glorious robe of the righteousness of Christ, and in having the sweet draughts of the Image of Christ engraven upon our hearts, we would have more victory over our lusts: There is a command for a perfect love to that which is good, and holiness in that same place, Rom. 12.9. and cleave (saith he) to that which is good, or as the word may be rendred, *Be married and gleeved* to that which is good, let there be an unteparable and indissoluble knot of union between you and that which is good: And certainly, if once we believed that report which is given of holiness, we would endeavour more to be clothed with it: but that is the great ground why we advance not in holiness, we know not the advantage nor dignity, to be made like God. O will ye think on it: What a thing is it for you who are the dust of

his feet, to be made conform to him ! Seemeth
 a Christian is not much in the exercise of other
 duties that should go along with Faith, suspect
 that Faith for presumption, that can act and be
 maintained without Prayer, certainly Prayer
 keepeth in the life of Faith: Prayer it is that grace
 that must act mutually with faith, in accomplishing
 that blessed work of Sanctification : and if we
 prayed more, and believed more, then we should
 have more to speak concerning the victory over
 our lusts. When was it, O Christian & expectant
 of Heaven, that ye was constrained to put up an
Ebenezer, and cry forth, *Hitherto hath the Lord
 helped me* ? When was it, O Christian and expectant
 of Heaven, that ye was put to cry forth, *God
 hath arisen, and mine enemies are scattered before
 my face*. I will tell you what is your practise : ye
 make such a Covenant with your idols as *Nabab*
 did with the men of *Fabesh Gilead*, 1 Sam. 11. 2. 3.
 your lusts desire to make you pluck out your right
 eyes, & there is nothing your lusts will command
 you, but almost ye will obey, but would you send
 out prayer as a messenger to tell the King of such
 tyranny, ye should know better what it is to be
 victorious. There is such a Covenant between
 the graces of the spirit, especially between Faith
 and Prayer (if so we may allude) as was made be-
 tween *Joab* and *Abishai*, 2 Sam. 10. 11. one grace
 as it were, saith to another, if I be weak, *come over
 and help me*: and if ye be weak, *I will come and help
 you*. When one grace is like to fall in battel, then
 another grace cometh and helpeth it ; when faith

is like to die, then prayer and experience cometh in, and sweetly helpeth faith, when love is beginning to die, & wax cold in the fight, then faith cometh in and putteth life in love; & when patience is like to fall and be overcome, then faith comes in and speaks that word to patience, *Wait on God, for I shall yet praise him for the health of his countenance.*

Oftentimes our patience and our sense they joyn together, for when sense speaketh good things, patience is in life; but when once sense preacheth hard things, it is like to die, and faith must then maintain and uphold it.

The third thing that we shall speak as to Faiths influence upon Sanctification, shall be to draw these four conclusions from the point.

The first is, That ye may know from this the rise and original of your little success over corruption: There are many that are troubled with this question: O! what is the ground that I get not victory over my lusts: and they propose that question to Christ, that once the disciples proposed to him, *Why was it that I could not cast out such a Devil?* And I can give no other answer nor Christ gave to them, it is because ye have not faith: for if ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might lay unto your idols, depart from us, and they should obey you, and there should not be a mountain in the way between you and Heaven; but if ye had Faith, it should be rouled away, and become a plain. And the great ground why many are groaning under the captivity of their idols, is, That they are not much in the exercise of faith.

Sometimes ye enter in the lists with your lusts in your own strength, then ye are carried captives, and if ye do enter in the lists having some Faith, yet ye maintain not the war, if Faith get but one stroak.

I will tell you six things, which if Faith overcome, it keepeth the fields, and maketh the Christian sing a song of triumph, even before a compleat victory.

First, Faith helpeth a Christian to overcome that idol of Impatience and Discontent, some never meet with a discouragement, but they cry out: *This evil is of the Lord, why should I wait any longer*: they are soon put to the end of their patience: Now Faith can overcome such an idol, and I will tell you three excellent things that faith performeth to the soul under impatience, or when it is in hazard of it. Faith telleth the Christian, *there is an end*, and their *expectation shall not be cut off*. Faith telleth that there is a morning as well as a night, and this keepeth the soul from being overcome with discouragement, when they are brought to the midnight of trouble. Faith can tell what hour of the night it is, and how near the approaching of the morning, when day shall break, and all their clouds flee away. 2. Faith helpeth the Christian to see there is much in Christ to make up any loss or disadvantage that they have; if ye lose your son, or your choicest contentment in the World, Faith will say to you such a word as *Elkanah* said to *Hannah*, 1 Sam. 1. 8. *Is not Christ better to thee then ten sons?*

The choicest contentments ye can loose (that is faiths divinity) Christ is worth an hundred of them: and so this maketh the soul be ashamed of their impatiency, and to give over their fretting at the excellent and wise dispensations of God.

3. Faith letteth a Christian see that there is not a dispensation that he meeteth with, but it hath these two excellent ends it hath our advantage as one end, & the glory of the Lord as another end: and there is not a dispensation that a Christian meeteth with, but these are the glorious ends proposed in it. And therefore I would only give you this advice, evermore when ye meet with a dark dispensation, let Faith interpret it, for it is only the best interpreter of dark dispensations: for if ye meet with sense, this is its interpretation, he is not chastening me in love, but punishing with the wound of an enemy, but Faith will prophesy good things to you in the darkest night.

The second next great idol that Faith will bring low, is that idol of covetousness and desire to the things of the World. I think that word, Eccl. 3. 11. was never so much accomplished, as it is in these dayes, and amongst you, *He hath set the world in your hearts*; that is, the idol that dwelleth and lodgeth within you, yea, the world it hath your first thoughts in the morning, and your last thoughts at night; yea more, it hath your thoughts when ye are at Prayer, & when ye are at Preaching, yea it hath such a dominion over you, that it giveth you, as it were, a new Bible, & in all the ten Cōmands scrapeth out the name of God, & setteth

down the world. And whereas God saith, *Thou shalt have no other Gods but me*, the World saith, *Thou shalt have no other Gods but me*, &c. But faith will bring this idol low, and soon leryou see the vanity and emptiness of it, yea faith would leryou see a more noble object, and withal, discover unto you how short your time is, and how few hours ye have to spend in following after lies. And I am perswaded of this, that if ye could win to shake hands with cold death every day, and say, thou at last shall be my Prince, and shall be the King to whom I shall be a subject, and if ye believed that the day of eternitie were approaching, it would be a mean to mortifie these pursuits after the World: and I shal say, he is a blessed Christian that can maintain alwayes such thoughts of the world; as he shal have when he is standing upon the utmost line between Time and Eternity. I shal say it, and believe it, O worldling, and O thou that hast the Moon upon thy head, and in thy heart, the day shall once come, that thou may preach as much of the vanity of the World, as those that undervalued it never so much.

The third great idol that Faith will bring low, is, that idol of *self-love* and *self-indulgence*, that which is the great-mother of all other idols. I think if there were no more to be said against that idol of self-love and self-indulgence, that which is in 2 Tim. 3. 2. were sufficient, that amongst all the great idols of the latter times, this is put in the first place, they *shal be lovers of themselves*: we cannot take pains for Christ, we cannot go about the exercise

exercise of any duty, because that idol of self-indulgence forbiddeth us. I will tell you its counsel & great advice is giveth you, *O person pity thy self*, that same counsel Peter gave his Master, it biddeth you pity your self. But if we could rightly interpret that language, it would be this, *destroy your self*, for *self-indulgence* and *self-love*, is that which will ruine you. O what blessed attainments of God; what blessed fruitions of Jesus Christ, what advancement in mortification, what conformity to God, hath that idol of self-indulgence obstructed, and *only not* utterly ruined, even in the best? I think, if once ye could set your foot upon that idol: the rest should fall apace, that is the general of all the forces of your lusts and it is a *Saul*, the head higher then the rest of all your idols within you.

The fourth idol that faith will subdue, is self-righteousness, this is a great thing we maintain, we will never renounce our own righteousness, and submit to the righteousness of Christ: and the great ground of it is, That there is this principle within us all, we love to go to Heaven thorow a Covenant of works, and we never desire to be much obliged to any other, we cannot submit our selves to the righteousness of Christ.

The fifth great idol that faith can subdue, is that of *pleasure*, the world, and the contentments of it: *Pleasure* is the great idol that many worship and adore: there are some that love the gain of the world, and there are others that love the pleasures of the world; but Faith hath a noble influence upon the bringing low of such an idol; for

faith discovereth to a soul more excellent pleasures, more sweet delights nor is to be found under the Sun: Faith maketh a Christian lose his taste unto all things that are here below: Faith that grace that maketh us grow blind, and so much to behold these passing vanities, those transient delights of a present evil world.

Our second conclusion is this, that Faith helpeth Sanctification, so Sanctification helpeth Faith. I will tell you three great advantages faith hath by the growth and exercise of Sanctification.

1. It is a noble evidence of Faith, and maketh a Christian to be perswaded that he is settled upon the Rock, and that his interest in God is made sure. Sanctification is that which will help a Christian daily to read his interest in God; this is clear from *Jam. 2. 18. I will shew thee my faith by my works*, where this is clearly holden forth, that a Christian much in the work of Sanctification, he can upon all times give an extract of his faith, and, as it were, discover it and shew it to the World.
2. Sanctification maketh faith perfect, according to that remarkable word, *James 2. 22. And by works was faith made perfect*. There is a noble perfection that redoundeth to Faith through the exercise of the work of Sanctification; for not only is it thereby made manifest, and receiveth such a shining lustre and splendor, as that sometimes the eyes of carnal men are even dazzled to behold a Believer, but it also receiveth strength and power: Faith is not of the nature of these things that spend themselves in bringing forth: but on the contrary, if Faith bring forth an hundred

children (I mean works of holiness) in one day it groweth stronger : and this is further clear, 2 Pet.

1. 8. *For if these things be in you, and abound, ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful.* And from that other word, *Jam. 2.* where is said, *That faith without works is dead, being alone :* if Faith be alone, it wants its spiritual life and vigour; but if ye were much in the exercise of the work of Sanctification, ye would, no doubt, attain to a noble and lively acting of that grace of Faith. And lastly, if a Christian be much in the work of Sanctification, there will be a comfortable exercise of Faith : Sometimes Faith is exercised with much anxiety, and sometimes with much doubting; but Faith and a pure Conscience joynd together, they make an excellent feast, and maketh a Christian rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Thirdly, we may draw this conclusion, If faith have influence upon the work of Sanctification, and helpeth the producing of a noble conformity to God, then, I say, there are many that their faith is a delusion, and their hope shall be cut off as a spiders web. There are some that have faith, that have not Sanctification, nor knows not what it is, and shall see that faith unquestionably perish as a dream, and vanish as the vision of the night; and therefore if ye would testifie the reality of your faith, and study more the work of Sanctification. I shalld but from *Job 8. 14. 15.* give you these eight properties of a hypocrites faith and hope, which may make you try and examine your self.

1. Their hope & their faith is but an act of folly,

yea, there is not such an act of foolishness under Heaven, as a hypocrites hope; because it is but a castle in the air, and as writing to himself a charter on the sand: so that word ye have rendered. *whose hope shal be cut off*, is in the Original, *whose folly shal be cut off*; shewing this, that they build without a foundation, and so their faith must be most unsure and uncertain. 2. The thing they hope for, shal at last loath them: O hypocrites, ye hope for enjoyment of Christ, but be perswaded of it, Christ shal eternally loath you, and ye shal eternally loath Christ: that is clear in the same word, *whose hope shal be cut off*, or as the word may be read, *whose hope shal loath them*, the thing he hoped for shal loath him, and Christ shal say, *Depart, I know you not*. 3. And though ye have now much delight and pleasure in the actings of your presumptuous hope, yet at the last, ye shal loath that hope: The word will carry, that not only the things ye hoped for shal loath you, but ye likewise shal loath your hope. The day is coming that ye shal cry forth, cursed be the day that ever I believed that I should get heaven. 3. It shal at last be the matter of his vexation, *from* that word, *whose hope shal be cut off*, or as the word may be rendered, *whose hope shal vex him*. O woe to the hypocrites shal meet with that anxious, *the* readfull disappointment one day, they shal *me* put their hand on their head, being ashamed *he* cause of their confidence. 4. He studieth by *and* means to keep his hope, though it be but false; *th*efore have ye that word in the 15. ver. *he holdeth it fast*, or as the word is, *he keepeth it with his arm*.

with all his strength he keepeth his hope : so that if Christ would come from heaven, and say, man, thou art a hypocrite, and thy hope shall be cut off, they would say, I will keep my hope, Sir, and maintain it, and that is an evidence your hope is not built upon the foundation; I love never a Faith that in this side of time is unchangeable, & never knoweth what it is to have ups nor downs. 5. It is built alwayes upon a wrong foundation, which is imported in that word, *He shall lean upon his house*, which we suppose may be interpreted, he shall lean upon his worldly enjoyments, or upon these spiritual-like enjoyments he met with. The hope of a hypocrite is never built upon Christ, and so unquestionably that hope shall be cut off & vanish. 6. Let hypocrites hold fast their hope with both their arms, I will say these three words to them. First, if all the Ministers should preach to you, and desire you to quite your hope, and ye will not, yet both your hope and you shall be separate: as it is in that word, *Your hope shall depart from you*, and ye shall quite it. Secondly, your hope will bring you to death, and no further: According to that word. *Job 18. 14. Whose hope shall bring him to the King of terrors*: Will it bring me no further say you? O no, *The King of terrors shall separate you and your hope*. Thirdly, the day is coming when the foundation of it shall be discovered, and there shall not be a delusion but it shall be unfolded. The day is approaching when Christ shall ask how you got your Faith, and how you maintained it? 7. The hypocrites hope is a poor building, it is as a *spiders web*: which I conceive

(without being critick) is this, The hope of hypocrites they spin out of their own bowels, they have it not from Christ, but as ye see a Spider spin out of its own bowels, so do they out of themselves, it is no better stuff then their own rotten righteousness. Christ never begat those unlovely hope. Let me beseech you therefore, that by all means ye would study to make sure your interest in God, and to build your faith on him, whose Name is that *munition of rocks*; for believe it, I may say it with much perswasion, I know there are many that shal once meet (if God prevent it not) with a dreadful disappointment; and therefore as ye would not incur that eternal hazard that is attending those that presumptuously take hold of a hope, before Christ take hold of them, study to search your hope what it is: I desire not to raze any foundation of their hope that is laid by the hand of Christ, but would desire and charge you, to raze the foundation of that hope which ye have laid from the beginning by your own hands, *and he knew it not*. I would press these three things upon you. First, O ye that are strangers to Christ, and that know not what it is to embrace the offers of the everlasting Gospel, obey that excellent counsel, 2 Chron. 30. 8. *Give Christ your hand*; for that word which ye have rendered, *Yeeld your self to the Lord*, it is in the Original, *Give your hand to God*; which is in short, *marry him*, and be content to *contract your self to him*: for believe it, the day is coming, that either that contract between you and Christ, shal be eternally confirmed, or that contract between

the Devil and you shal be eternally ratified. And I suppose, there is so much spoken to the commendation of that *noble plant of renown*, that ye may take Christ (if so we may speak) blindly, ye may close your eyes and take him, for he shall never disappoint your hope; for let you think of him to eternity, he shal always be above your thoughts. Secondly, I would earnestly desire you once to search and try, what was the first rise of your faith in Jesus Christ: I am perswaded of it, there are many that take up their faith at their foot, they never travelled in pain, and yet faith is brought forth: Is not this a mystery? Shall it be said, *before they travelled, they brought forth*? I do not question but there may be lets and greater pangs of the new birth; but this is most certain, there is alwayes some either lesser troubles or greater, till that child be brought forth: and yet I may condemn *these that stay too long in the place of the breaking forth of children*. Christ will never refuse you when ye do really come, because you have not been so many years and days in prison to the law. Thirdly, let me desire you to go and ask, is there a grave between you and Heaven, in all that way thorow which the Saints have travelled, upon which this is written, *Here lyeth a man that sincerely sought life from Christ, and he denyed him*? I think without encroaching too much upon the searching forth of the exercise of the Saints in Heaven, I think we may suppose there may be in Heaven some queries and interrogations: Christ shall ask, *O beloved, did ye want any thing here below, when ye was sent forth to travel in the*

world? And ye shal be constrained to answer, No.
 Christ shal ask that question at you, *Did I not all
 things well?* And ye shal be constrained to answer
 Yes. Christ shal propose that question, *Are ye not
 well rewarded for all your pains?* And you shall be
 constrained to answer, Yes. O but to take him, he
 is the blessed and most excellent One in heaven
 and in earth, it is the best bargain ever ye made.
 O ye merchants, that have made many excellent
 bargains to your own apprehension, will ye come
 and make one excellent bargain yet, that wil make
 you eternally up. And what is that? come and buy
 Christ, and take him for nothing. This is not your
 ordinary bargaining: There is few comes to you,
 and biddeth you buy excellent things *without mo-
 ney*, but come in the Gospel, & ye shal get Christ
without money. O niggards! that are loath to spend
 your money in the World, will ye come to Christ
 and believe on him, take him freely. O, say ye, if
 I could get three things of Christ, I would come.
 1. I would have much gold and silver. I say, come
 to Christ, and ye shal get much gold and silver. Is
 that true? It is abundantly true. See Job 22 25.
 26. where pressing that exhortation, *Acquaint thy
 self with God*; and using many arguments, he saith,
*Thou shalt lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir
 as the stones of the brooks*. Is that not gold enough?
 yea, ye shal have silver likewise, *Thou shalt have
 plenty of silver*. In the 26. vers. ye shall not only
 have gold and silver, but shal have plenty of it, and
 shall have the most excellent and refined gold. But
 O, say ye, will that promise be literally accom-
 plished to me, if I come to Christ? I would only

I say these three things to thee. 1. Come to Christ, and if gold and silver be for thy advantage, thou shalt have it literally accomplished. 2. I say, ye shall have as much contentment in Jesus Christ, as if ye had this house full of gold. 3. I will say this to thee, Christ shall be thy gold and thy silver: according to that word in the 26. v. which is most remarkable; yea, the *Almighty shall be thy defence*; or as it is in the Original, *shall be thy gold*, speaking of the promise of gold before. Secondly, ye say, I would have this, that what I purpose might be accomplished. I say, come to Christ, and ye shall have that likewise, Job 22. 28. *Thou shalt decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee*: which I conceive, doth not only take in these spiritual decrees; but likewise these that relate to temporal enjoyments. But there is a third thing I would have (say ye) and I would come to Christ, and it is, that I might have all the desires of my heart. I say, O man! and, O woman! come to Christ, and thou shalt have what thou desireth: this is clear from Psal. 37. 5. *Delight thy self in God, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart*. What can ye have, man, but it is there? Would ye have any thing of Christ? He putteth a blank in your hand, and saith that word which he said to Solomon, *Ask, what would ye have, and I shall give you*? Christ, as it were, putteth his Name to the foot of a clean sheet of paper, and he desireth you to ask what you would have: And is not this an excellent bargain? O niggard! what would ye have which ye will not get in Christ? And be perswaded, that ye that
refuse

refuse and will not take him, the eternal curse of all that is in Heaven, will return upon thy head: and the eternal curse of all the expectants of Heaven and heirs of life, will return upon the head of that person that will not take Christ. And cursed shall that person be who will not take Christ, and one day all the Congregation in Heaven and Earth shall say, Amen.

S E R M O N V I I.

2 Cor. 13. 5. *Examine your selves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves: know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

Assurance is a precious gift which many that live in these days do undervalue, and tread under foot: do not the Christians of these times go halting between two opinions, being neither positive that they are received into the adoption of children, nor positive that they are yet in a state of alienation, and enemies in their minds by wicked works; yea, and (that which is worse) there are many amongst us that walk with much contentment under their uncertainty. I think it is a fault to be condemned in many, they pursue more to satisfy their sense for the present, not to have a solide well grounded assurance for time to come: I could wish that all the debates and questions of these dayes, that take up so much of our time, and so much of our spirits for better things, were happily drowned in these four excellent questions, which without controversy, are of greatest concernment

The faith of assurance

cernment for all to have resolved. 1. Assurance, is
I rest at night when the long shadows of the
lasting evening shall be stretched out upon it, try
and whether or no hath Christ gone before
take up a place for me in his Fathers house? 2. It
is a soul-concerning question, *Master, what shall I
do to inherit eternal life?* to be asking at him that
can sweetly resolve you. And 3. not to rest there,
but to be crying forth in the morning, *What shall I
do to be saved?* and to be crying out in the even-
ing, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* 4. It is
sweet to be asking seriously; *saw ye him whom
my soul loveth.* There is much of our time spent
in asking news from Court, and from abroad,
concerning the revolutions of States and King-
doms: but I suppose, it were better to ask, what
news from Heaven concerning thy self, and what
news from within, and news of thy bridegrooms
coming? for these are great Courts, I mean the
Court of Heaven, and the Court of Conscience,
the affairs of which a Christian should endeavour
much to know. 5. It is a soul-concerning que-
stion, that a Christian should be much in propo-
sing to himself, *What shall I render unto the Lord
for all his benefits?* It is certain we must say, that
our Faith and assurance, and all our other mer-
cies are from him, and yet alace! we are negli-
gent in his praises: we may with *Tamar*, rent
our garments of diverse colours, even the gar-
ments of the Kings daughters, because of spiritual
whoredom against God, and our ingratitude to
him.

Now

refuse and ~~will~~ having spoken unto you at so great
 all that is of that precious and fundamental grace
 the ~~eternal~~, we have thought fit to shut up all in spee
 and ~~ing~~ a little upon these words we now have read
 perle concerning the evidence and assurance of Faith
 sed The Apostle in this Chapter is vindicating his
 and Ministry and Apostleship, from the contempt
 E that was cast upon it: he proveth he was a Mi
 nister of the New Testament, called and sent of
 God, by the blessing and success he had amongst
 them, in that he had not plowed nor threshed in
 vain; and they being so much in censuring his
 way, and seeking an account of his Ministry. In
 these words, he doth (as it were) draw them off
 by a holy diversion unto another business, as if he
 had said to them, *O Corinthians*, I will divert you
 from the exercise of judging me, and will lead you
 into an exercise that is more divine and profitab
 le: be much in judging and examining your
 selves: and indeed, it is a truth worth our obser
 vation, that if we were more in judging of our
 selves, we would be less in judging others: but
 alas! there are some of us, we are so much a
 broad, that we cannot be much at home.

In the words, there is these six things considera
 ble. First, That there is such a thing attainable by
 a Christian while he is here, as a distinct perswa
 sion and assurance *that he is in the faith*, and hath
 an interest in Christ. *By being in the faith*, here
 not to be understood, a being in the doctrine
 faith only; but it is to be understood of principa
 ly, being indeed, and really united to Christ

The faith of assurance

Secondly, that the seeking after assurance, is a necessary commanded duty ; for ye see here the words very imparative, *Examine your selves, try your selves.* Thirdly, That there are many mistakes and delusions amongst people, concerning that noble and excellent thing *assurance*; there being many that keep fast a hope which Christ shall once discountenance, and sweep away, like a spider's web; and this is imported in these words, *Examine your selves*, or as the words may be rendered, *Take an accurate and experimented search of your selves: try your selves or prove your selves*: it is a word that is borrowed from the Gold-smiths of fining and trying of gold. And so his putting of the *Corinthians* to so accurate a search of themselves, saith this clearly to us, there are many mistakes concerning this thing, many do pass a decree in their own favors, before Christ hath passed his approbation of them. Fourthly, Take notice of this from the words, that there is much and exceeding much advantage, by trying and searching whether we be in the Faith or no, this is imported in his doubling the exhortation. Fifthly, That one most excellent and spiritual way of attaining assurance, whether we be in the Faith or no, is self-examination, and putting our self to the tryal; as if he had said, Would you have a distinct perswasion that ye are in Christ, then be much in the exercise of self-examination. For the rest of the words of the verse, we intend not to handle.

As to the first, *That there is such a thing attainable*, I shall only propose these reasons unto you,

to make it evident. 1. It is known in Scripture that the Saints of old have in an ordinary way attained to distinct perswasion of their interest in Christ, 2 Song 16. *My beloved is mine, and I am his*: and Rom. 8. 38. *I am perswaded (saith the apostle) that neither death, nor life, &c. shall be able to separate me from the love of God in Christ.* 2 Cor. 5. 1. *For we know, if this our earthly tabernacle were dissolved, we have a house with God, made with hands eternal in the heavens.* 2. It is the great scope of many Scriptures, to show how many Christians may attain to assurance, 1 John 1. 10. *These things I write unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life.* The great end and design of John, writing in these Epistles, is to make a full acquaintance with Christ, and to make them to accept of him, and to give them a distinct assurance that Christ hath accepted them. 3. There are many commands in Scripture for Christians, to be serious in searching after assurance, 2 Pet. 1. 10. *Wherefore, brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.* 4. It is the blessed end of Gods oath in the everlasting Covenant, that a Christian might get assurance. What was the ground and great end that God confirmed his Covenant with an oath, Heb 6. 18. *was it not, That by two immutable things, wherein it was impossible for God to lie, ye might have strong consolation?* 5. If assurance of our interest in Christ were not attainable, then these precious graces of joy, and joy could not be well exercised; if a Christian were evermore in the dark concerning his interest

Christ, he could not give obedience to that hortation, *Rejoyce evermore; again, I say, rejoyce.*

The Scripture hath set down these means by which a Christian may win to assurance: as is seen, 1 John 3. 18. 19. 2 Pet. 4. 9. compared with 1 Cor. 10. where the Apostle Peter pressing the doctrine of making our calling and election sure, he setteth down these excellent means by which they may win to it, and doubtless the marks and evidents that are registred in the Scripture of a gracious state, do assure us that assurance is attainable. 7. What are the ends of the Sacraments, but that our assurance may be confirmed, and that our faith may be strengthened: the two Sacraments are the two great seals of Heaven that are put to the charter of the Covenant.

Now as to the application, and the more full improvement of this first point, I shall only offer these considerations. 1. I would have it taken notice of that though grace and assurance be two lovers, yet there is no such band of union between them, that the one cannot consist without the other: a Christian may have the real grace of God, and yet walk in darkness and have no light: a Christian may be going to heaven, and yet that word oftentimes in his mouth, *I am cut off from his sight*; yea, are there not even some who have had assurance, and sometime a day have been admitted to draw that conclusion, *I am my beloveds*, and *his desire is towards me*, who are now under darkness concerning their interest and in much bitterness of spirit, do sometimes cry out
my

my hope and my strength is perished from the Lord. But therefore let me say this one word, both to weak ones who never had assurance, and to strong ones who have lost it; when ye mis-assure yourselves, beware of drawing such negative conclusions concerning your graces; but when ye sit in darkness and see no light, *Trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay your selves upon your God*; that is, when ye cannot reach the Faith of assurance, be diligent in maintaining of adherence: remember Job's testimony, *Though thou should kill me, yet will I trust thee: & consider that sweet word, he will keep thee in perfect peace whose hearts are stayed on him.*

My second consideration is, That since assurance is attainable, ye would study to find out, and remove these things that doth hinder you from attaining unto it. And that we may help you in this, we conceive, that the obstructions of a Christians assurance, are especially in these two, 1. In mistaking of the Lords dealing towards us. And 2. In our untender and unseizable dealing towards him.

Of the first sort we shall lay before you five. The first is, want of favourable return in prayer; this often maketh a Christian to doubt of his interest, and call in question his evidence. *Lam. 3. 8. compared with vers. 18. I cry and shout, but he shutteth out my prayers*: and this is the conclusion of that dispensation, vers. 18. *My hope is perished, my strength is perished from the Lord*: and it is especially occasioned when the Christian is very serious and fervent in prayer, and then he meeteth not with a return, this maketh them exceedingly

Debat their interest. And I confess, it is a sad dispensation to meet with a silent Christ in prayer; but yet that needeth not make a believer question at all, and debate the reality of his interest in God, since the dearest of all the childring of the Kingdom have been so dealt with, even a David, Psal. 12. *Cryed night and day without silence, and is not heard, but cryeth out, Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring; yea, but that passage may relate to him who was the root and off spring of David; for even he was so dealt with, and had not presently a sensible return, when he had prayed thrice, that the cup might pass from him.*

Secondly, The want of sensible enlargement and liberty in prayer, that he never goeth to his knees, but his heart beginneth to dye like a stone within him, then he cryeth forth the word, 2 Cor. 13. 17. *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; and sure, if I had the Spirit of the Lord, I would have liberty in the exercise of prayer: and that this is a rise of the disputing of our interest, is clear from Psal. 77. 4. compared with vers. 7. and 9. saith David, I am sore troubled that I cannot speak, I have no liberty in prayer, I never go to God in prayer, but (as it were) my tongue sticketh to the roof of my mouth: he from hence draweth a conclusion, Hath God forgotten to be gracious, and hath he in wrath shut up his tender mercies for ever? I confess, this also is a sad dispensation to meet with an absent and veiled Christ in prayer; so that we can never go to seek God*

in secret, but we may write this upon our prayers, *He is gone, he is gone*, especially when we have lost that liberty that formerly we have had: and therefore is *Dauids* perplexity much lightened, *vers. 5. 6.* from his remembering his song in the night, and his calling to mind the years of ancient times: yet we may remember how soon *David* wrote his retractions, as to that sad conclusion, *I said this is my infirmity*, *vers. 10.* and so should we do when upon every straiting in prayer, we begin to question all the Lords kindness toward us.

A third obstruction of assurance, is a Christians wrestling with his corruptions painfully and seriously, and yet not meeting with any sensible victory over them, but upon the contrary, their corruptions seem to be stronger, and they themselves seem to be weaker, and then it is, they strengthen their misbelief, by that word, *1 John 3. 3.* *Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.* And indeed this is a knot that is not easily loosed, but when he seeth his idols and corruptions prevailing over him, he will cry out, *I am gone, and there is no hope in Israel concerning this age*, and yet this also is a word in haste. *Paul* hath registrate himself a standing witness, even after he was a chosen vessel, *Rom. 7.* How strangely a child of God may be born down with a body of death, even under most serious wrestlings against it: And therefore if thou do seriously maintain the combate, though thou do not sensibly prevail, thou hast no reason upon that ground to weaken thy assurance.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, when a Christian is put to more then ordinary outward affliction, when God doth dispence sadly unto them in outward things, then they begin to call in question their interest, and dispute their assurance, this is clear by comparing Lam 3. vers. 18. with the preceeding words, where speaking of the sad dispensations they met with, he draweth that conclusion in vers. 18. *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord: & Jonah 2. 3.* where he draweth that conclusion from such a promise, *I am now cast out of thy sight*, the Devil he taketh Eliphaz divinity and presents it to a Christian, *call now if there be any to answer thee, and to which of the Saints wilt thou go*, as if he had said, did thou ever know a Christian afflicted so as thou art afflicted, and so he would have Job to quite his integrity; But yet we know all these blessed ones, for all their afflictions were dear unto the Lord, and had their interest secure in him, yea, as many as he loveth, he doth rebuke and chasten and it is the bastards, and not sons, on whom he will not bestow a rod, and therefore we ought not to quarrel our interest because of afflictions.

And lastly, the rise of a Christians discouragement, and that which hindereth their assurance, is when their former experience of the manifestations of God doth not relish to them, and when the promises upon which they have built become tasteless unto them, *as the white of an egge*, and when they meet not with God in Ordinances, but these become lifeless, when these three rise together upon them, their case becomes very per-

plexed oftentimes: and this also seemed to have been *David's case*, *Psal. 77*. When he remembered his song in the night, and the dayes of old, and yet had no sweetness in them, then he breaketh forth into these bitter complaints which are there expressed: but yet as we said before, this was his infirmity, and there is no reason for a Christian to question his interest upon such an account; because the Ordinances are not at all times always lively even to the best: and the Lord is not always present, but though sometimes the candle of the Lord doth shine upon his head, yet at other times he is necessitate to cry out: *O that it were with me as in moneths past.*

The second sort of obstructions of a Christian assurance, I mean such as flow from our unkind dealing toward God, are.

First, a guilty conscience, that is a remarkable word, *1 Tim. 3. 19. Holding the mystery of Faith in a pure conscience*; It telleth us, that this excellent grace Faith, cannot abide but in a cleanly lodging, even in a pure conscience: and when a Christian setteth about to believe, he will know how guilty conscience will flee in his face, and cry out, *O adventure not to believe, dare thou believe*; the guiltiness of a Christians conscience maketh him oft to cry out, *Touch not the mountain, lest thou be thrust thorow*: And I tell you three disadvantages of a guilty conscience. 1. It obstructeth a Christians boldness, in making applications to Christ; his heart saith close, and his necessity saith close: but his guilty conscience cryeth out, *O stand*

aback, and do not close. 2. A guilty conscience oftentimes it hindereth the discoveries of Christ to the soul, and doth so affright and terrify, yea it will so sting and bite us, that when he revealeth himself we cannot take notice, when he would lay on a plaister on our souls, will tear it off and refuse to be comforted. 3. It doth exceedingly obstruct our going about duty. O but our souls moves slowly in the paths of God when we are under the power of a guilty conscience.

The second obstruction is, that we are not much in the exercise of tenderness. O but if a Christian were tender, and if in every step of his life he desired to walk with Christ, and in every step of his life he desired to set Christ before his eyes, he would easily win to much assurance, according to that word, *Isai. 64. 5. Thou meetest him that rejoicest and worketh righteousness, and these that remember thee in thy ways:* would ye know the assured Christian, it is the tender Christian; the Christian that doth not crucify convictions, the Christian that breaketh not resolutions, the Christian that doth not sit calls and opportunities to prayer, the Christian that saith not of any sin, it is a little one; or the Christian that searcheth always, watcheth always, examineth always, and is always casting out sin, that is the assured Christian.

The 3. obst. is the want of the exercise of the grace of fear, we are not much under this disposition, to fear the Lord and his goodness, this is clear from that word, *Psalms 25. 14. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will*

shew to them his Covenant. I think there are these two great evidences, that much of the power of godliness is gone from some of our hearts: we fear God no more, nor if we were his companion; 2. And we fear our selves no more, nor if we had not a deceitful heart within us, we neither fear God nor our selves, and that speaketh that much of the life of Religion is lost amongst us.

The fourth thing that doth much obstruct our assurance, is *much worldly mindedness*, & too eager pursuit after the things of a present life: that is remarkable, 2 Cor. 4. v. last compared with 2 Cor. 5. 1. *We look not unto the things that are seen*, that is, we are not much taken up with the things of a present World, which the men of the World seek and delight themselves in: and it is subjoyned, *For we know if this our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a house not made with hands*, so we see assurance & mortification to the World, are much knit together. Would ye know where to find our hearts? The most part of us are conversing with idols of the World. Would ye know where to find our hearts? They are among the vanities of the World. O how true is that word, Psalm 39. *Man walks in a vain show*: What is man all his actings, but as one walking in a long gallery that is set about with pictures, gazing on these things, and saluting them all, as if they were living Kings and Queens and great persons that could do him good, and so our pursuing after the World, is nothing else but a *dead shadow* pursuing after *dead shadows*: a man that is but a short li-
ving

ving shadow pursuing after vanity and nothing; and this he fools away his time, forgetting to make sure the one thing necessary.

Fifthly, want of distinct apprehensions of these three, the infinit love of Christ, the infinit power of Christ, and the infinit wisdom of Christ: there is not an objection, O Christians, that ye have from the multitude of your sins, but it may be drowned in infinit love; there is not an objection ye have concerning the strength of your idols, but it may be drowned in that immense Ocean or the infinit power of Christ: there is not an objection ye have for your wants, or about your evil nature, but ye may drown it in the infinite wisdom and goodness of Christ, & there can be nothing against your assurance, but may be sweetly answered also from these rightly applyed, taken up, and rested on by the soul. The last thing that hindereth our assurance, is the smallness of the measure of grace that we have attained; for when grace is small, it is hard to be discerned, and therefore if we would have assurance, learn not to ly still and despire, but to rise up and to increase our stock, and then you shal know ye are rich, *Grow in grace and the knowledge of God*, and by this ye shal know if ye follow on to know the Lord.

The third consideration is, that assurance is not bestowed at all times: but there are some special times and seasons when God giveth a Christian a broad sight of his interest, and I shall but name these.

The first is, when he is first converted, and

Christ and he joynes hands together, even then sometimes the best robe is put on upon the prodigal son, and the fatted Calf is killed, and a ring is put upon his hand, and shoes upon his feet. *Acts 9.17.* Paul meeteth with assurance immediately after his conversion, *1 John 2.12.14.* I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you, so that when a Christian is brought into Christ, he will (as it were) lead them to the Registers of heaven, and say, friend, come and see, here is your name written from eternity: But do not mistake me, I do not say this is always so, but these whom Christ converteth through the thunders of the Law, these most frequently meet with intimation of the pardon of their sins and peace of God, even at their first acquaintance. I know there are some Christians, that if ye ask at them when they were begotten to a lively hope, they would say that word that the blind man once said, *One thing I know, I was once blind, but now I see*, but for the time and the day, I know not when it was.

The second time is, when they are wrestling with God like Princes in prayer, and watching unto that exercise, *Dan 9.23.* compared with the preceeding verse, he being much and serious in prayer, doth meet with that word from Heaven: *O man greatly beloved*; or as the word is, *O man of desires*, and *Acts 10.2.3.4.* when *Cornelius* is much in exercise of watching and prayer, he seeth a vision, and getteth intimation of his peace with God; and *Jacob* when he was wrestling with

Christ,

Christ, Gen. 34. he hath that testimony given him. *Thou hast as a Prince wrestled with God and prevailed.*

The third thing is, when a Christian is passing through the gates of death, and is upon the borders of Eternity; I desire not to be mistaken in this neither; I know some Christians are led to Heaven thorow a dark trance, so as they never see a blink of the countenance of Christ, untill the day come that they get him in their arms eternally within his Fathers house. Some Christians when they go through the gates of death, they may be disputing of this question, *Where am I going*; but this is certain, that sometimes, yea, oftentimes Christ will dispense a broad sight of a Christians interest unto him at the day of death, 2 Sam. 25. 5. When was it that David sang that song, which hath strengthened thousands in the very jaws of death, *God hath made with me an everlasting Covenant*, was it not when death was shaking hands with him? and 2 Tim. 4. 8. When was it that Paul sang that song, *I fought the good fight of faith, I have finished my course, hence forth is laid up for me a Crown of righteousness*, was it not even then when he was ready to depart, and to be offered up? And when was it when old Simeon did sing that blessed song, Luke 2. 29. *Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace: for my eyes have seen thy salvation*, was it not within a step of death, as it were, he went to heaven with Christ in his arms, or rather in his heart he carried Christ with him, and found Christ before him, and so death to Simeon was a change of his place, and not a change of his company.

The fourth time is, when he is to be put to some hard and difficult duty: Before *Abraham* he put to forsake his native Land, and become a stranger and a wanderer, he meeteth with sweet intimation of his interest, *Gen. 12. 2. I will make of thee a great nation:* and *v. 7. The Lord appeared to Abraham:* and before *Jeremiah* he sent a Preacher to a rebellious people, he will have that word spoken unto him, *I know thee before thou wast brought forth.*

The fifth time is, when a Christian hath done some singular act of obedience, when *Abraham* had obeyed the Lord, and was content to offer up his *Isaac*, he meeteth with a sight of his interest and Covenant renewed to him with an oath, *Gen. 22. 16. By my self have I sworn, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withholden thy son, even thy only son, blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee as the stars of Heaven.*

The sixth time is, when a Christian is to meet with hard tryals, difficulties, and afflictions in the World, then they usually meet with assurance, and so, *Gen. 28. 14. 15. 16.* before *Jacob* go to serve *Laban*, he meeteth with intimation of his peace with God.

The seventh time is, when a Christian is under a sad persecution and affliction, then will the Lord give a word from Heaven to comfort him, and assure him of his Fatherly love and mercy: When was it that Christ left that noble legacy to his disciples, *John 14. v. 27. My peace I leave with you, my peace I give you,* was it not when he him-

self was to leave them to troublesome and sorrowfull dayes in a persecuting world?

The eighth time is, at some solemn Ordinances and approaches to God, the dayes of a communion to a tender Christian have been sweet days, when Christ hath come to the soul, and said, *Behold me, behold me.* I think the eleven Apostles met with much assurance of their interest in Christ at the communion they were at with him. O what sweet intimations were these, *This is my Body which is broken for you; and this Cup is the New Testament in my blood shed for you:* and a little after, *you are they which have continued with me in my tentations, & I appoint unto you my kingdom.*

We come now to the second point which we proposed from the words, *viz.* That as assurance is a thing which may be attained, so to seek after it, is a necessary duty: let me not be mistaken, as if I said, the having of assurance were simply necessary to Salvation: no, that were a doctrine as comfortless upon the other hand, as the Popish doctrine of the impossibility of assurance is upon the other. But the thing I say, is that the Christians seeking after assurance, and his real endeavouring to attain unto it, is a necessary command of God which he hath bound upon the consciences of his children amongst other Gospel duties; And certainly, we need go no further for the clearing of this then the Text it self; what meaneth these peremptory instructions, *Examine your selves whether ye be in the faith or not: Prove your selves; Know ye not, &c.* but if ye will, you may adde that word, 2 Pet. 1. v. 5. and 10. com-

pared, what can be more expressly commanded, and more strongly pressed, then that Christians should bend their uttermost endeavors for attaining unto this blessed condition of assurance: *Give diligence, yea, the rather giving all diligence to make your calling and election sure.*

From this, we shall only lay before you these considerations: 1. If the seeking after assurance be a necessary duty, then these three things are most lamentable. First, that there are so many in this Generation *who are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their iniquity*; they flatter themselves with a rotten assurance, that hath no other foundation but their own imagination: they never knew since the first day they were baptized and did begin to profess Christ, what it was to mortify one lust, nor seriously to wrestle against one temptation, and yet they want not a strong persuasion of their interest in Christ: But ah, will ye stand in awe, lest ye meet with such a dreadful disappointment, as (as when ye think ye are in the very gate of Heaven) even then to fall backwards to the very bottom of Hell: and when we expect a kindly welcom from the Lord of glory, as one who thinks you have been in Covenant with him this many years, ye meet with that dreadful summons, *Depart from me ye cursed, I know you not.*

2. How sad may we be upon this account, that howbeit assurance be an attainable thing, and a great many dare not say they have attained it; yet so little diligence is used in pursuing after it: Is it not very lamentable, that many of you to whom I am speaking, since first ye gave up your names

to Christ in a visible way, and were reputed amongst the generation of the seekers of his face, scarce ever set a day or an hour apart to examine whether ever indeed ye were in Christ or not.

Ah, is Heaven of so little moment? Is the having or wanting all the enjoyments which are there, of so small concernment to you, that ye will not be at the pains as once to enquire after your interest in the matter? What if any of you were but possessors of a thousand pound, and of your interest or right unto it uncertain and questionable, would not your sleep depart from you, and your rest be unquiet till you had made it more secure? What think you shall the men of this generation answer in the day of the Lord, for neglecting *that one thing necessary*, when they have been so vexing themselves *about many things*, and have been so serious in so many consultations, to make sure a worm-eaten portion in a perishing world, that the whole wit of men and angels cannot secure for one moment? It is certain, the root of all this sloathfulness is Atheism: It is not possible that we believe as really there is a heaven, as we believe there is an earth, or that the world to come is as real as that which is present; or else it must be a strange power in these lusts that keeps us captive, that we are never suffered to think upon eternity, nor to ask where we must lodge when this cottage we carry about shall fall about our ears. O will ye think upon it, how serious and pressing that command is, 2 Pet. 1. 10: *Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.* When the Lord saith, *Give all diligence*, will ye

give no diligence? And when he saith, *make your calling and election sure*, will ye leave all upon uncertainty? *I said to the foolish, deal not so foolishly.*

3. It is most lamentable, that since assurance is attainable, yet men live so contentedly under the want thereof: How strange is it that many are so seldom on their knees complaining of their uncertainty? If Christ were precious unto you, would it be so? I am sure there are some of us here that have had the name of Christians, I know not how long, that never had one sad thought about the want of assurance: when we look upon the desolations, vastations and plundings in the World, how many of us can cry out, *They have taken away my Gods, and what have I more?* But when we speak of heaven, we care not who deprive us of our portion there. I will not limite the Lord, nor determine what he may do: but believe it, it is one to a thousand, if many Christians of this age have a pleasant night and comfortable closing of their eyes, they are such undervaluers of assurance: I may fear, that lamentation shall be heard upon the death-beds of many; *O poor wretched wandering soul, where art thou going?* And it is no wonder it come to this, when we are so long in beginning to ask the question. And now I close with this one thing, that I think beyond all question, the souls that live contentedly under the want of assurance, are the *careless daughters that dwelleth at ease*; Christ and they are at a remarkable distance; it must be a cold Winter and a dark night (at best) as to their present fellowship with God.

A second consideration from this point is, that if the seeking after assurance be so necessary a duty, then let me beseech you to ponder with your selves what means are fit for you to use, that ye may attain it, and if ye enquire what these means are, I shal only lay before you some few.

1. That they would be much in the exercise of Faith, I mean the direct acts of Faith, whereby the sinner from his sense and feeling of his wants, layeth hold on Jesus Christ, closing with him and leaning upon him for a full supply out of his fullness for indeed there are two great faults amongst the Lords people, some do seek assurance of Faith, before ever they seek to have faith. 2. Some are much more taken up in debating their evidences, whether they be real or not, then they are in strengthening their evidences, so the most of their time is spent in questioning: O is this a real evidence of assurance; where as more actual believing in Christ and gripping to the promises, and less disputing, were the shorter and the surer way: that word is most clear, *Eph. 1. 13. After ye believed, ye were sealed with the spirit of promise*, that is, ye got assurance, but not before ye believed: and ye know, it is said, *Matt 9. 2. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said, Son, be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee*, so then it is clear that to be much in believing, is the nearest away to assurance.

2. Ye would be much in believing the general truths and promises of the Gospel, and frequently meditating of them: all assurance is by a practical syllogism, the first proposition whereof must needs be a Scripture truth: And certainly

the firm assent to that truth, and the soules delightful meditation on it, is often blessed of the Lord as a special mean whereby the conscience is helped to make the assumption, and also to bring forth the conclusion; for instance, we see with what strength of affection Paul asserteth his faith on that word, 1 Tim. 1. 15. *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, Christ Jesus came to save sinners,* and presently we see what followeth on it, of whom *I am the chief*, then is his assurance: for doubtless he meaneth, that he was the chief of saved sinners; yea, certainly a sinner thus exercising himself, will often find so much sweetness in the general truths that he cannot but put to his own name.

3. Be diligent in the exercise of all spiritual graces and Christian duties, that this is amongst the best means to attaining to assurance, is manifest from 2 Pet. 1. *Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure*: for indeed it is very observable, that the diligence there mentioned, is not a diligence in disputing and questioning about our election, but a diligence in the practise of duties and graces, as is clear from vers. 5. *Give all diligence* (saith the Apostle) *whereto?* in adding to your Faith virtue, to your virtue knowledge, and to knowledge, temperance, &c. and then vers. 8. *If ye do these things, ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitfull in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*: he doth not say in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ simply, but of our Lord Jesus importing that, that the result of diligence in these graces shall be the knowledge of Christ as

ours, and of our interest in him : and then he addeth (upon the other hand) *he that lacketh these things, is blind and cannot see afar off*, that is, he cannot have a spirit of discerning, and cannot see far in any spiritual matter, and so not in the matter of his interest. O therefore, think not that ye will get assurance by lying down with the sluggard upon your bed, or by your formal prayers, or your anxious debates, but if ever ye come to assurance ye must be striving as in an agony, for so the word importeth which is used to express our diligence in Christian duties.

4. As ye would be diligent, so if ever ye would come to assurance, ye would be tender and circumspect in your walking, that is a clear word, Pl. 50. last vers. *To him that ordereth his conversation aright will he shew the salvation of God*, and Isai. 32. *The effect of righteousness is peace and assurance forever*. Ah! the untender walk that many of us have : it is no wonder to see us walk in darkness, such stinking gross vapors that arise from our conversation cannot but engender clouds that hinder us from seeing God : and certainly, such pearls as assurance, is not given to dogs and swine, lest they tread upon them.

S E R M O N V I I I .

2 Cor. 13. 5. *Examine your selves, whether ye be in the faith? prove your own selves, know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

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T Here are two great ballances into which men do weigh themselves: there are some that weigh themselves in the ballance of *deceit*, who think that in all their labors there is no iniquity to be found, yet God who is the weigher of the Spirit, when he shall weigh them, will engrave this upon their forehead, *Thou art weighed in the ballance and art found light*. O but there are many who approve themselves, whom Christ shall never approve: There are many that call God *Father*, who he will not call *Children*, and many that call Christ *Husband*, whom he will not call *Spouse*. 2. There are some who weigh themselves in the ballance of the *Sanctuary*, who upon solid and most spiritual grounds to draw this conclusion, *I am my beloveds, and his desire is towards me*, who can with boldness and confidence look Christ in the face, and say, *thou art mine*, and with much spiritual confidence take him in their arms, and cry out, *he shall be eternally mine*: and sure there is not a more pleasant life then to be taking him every day in our arms, and to be crying out, *Am I not made up in him, am I not made up in him?*

Before I come to the words, there are three great and most soul-concerning errours amongst the Christians of these dayes, that we desire ye may consider: 1. There are many that are more desirous to know what they are, then what they should do; there are some are more taken up to know whether they be justified and sanctified, then to be indeed justified and sanctified; and they
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are more desirous to know if they be in Christ, then indeed to be in him: and therefore we find many who do spend a great deal more time disputing that question, *whether am I in Christ, or not?* then they do in using of these means by which real Union and Communion with him may be attained: But oh, will ye once study more to be in him, and that shall be the shortest way, to attain to the knowledge of your being in him. The 2. great error is, that some are more desirous to know what they should do, then they are desirous to do what they know: are there not many of us that have this question, *Wherewith shal I come before the Lord*; and yet we do not know his commandment is with us, *that we should do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God*. A third error is, that we are more in talking of Christ, then in believing in him, or closing with him: some of us think to win to Heaven by discourses, if we can talk of Christ, we think all is without debate or controversy: but, alace! there are many who are sweet talkers of Christ, that are cursing him this day in hell. And I would only say this by the way, if there be any of you that have win to any soul-perswasion of your interest in Christ, I intreat you, if you can put the conclusion upon record, that in such a day of such a moneth, and in such a year of God, you then did win to cry out, *I am my beloveds, and he is mine*. It seemeth to have been Davids practise, Ps. 16. 2. *O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord*: And it was Jeremiahs practise, Lam. 3. 24. *The Lord is my portion,*
faith

saith my soul. I say, ye should even mark that conclusion, as they did, that when tentations come, and begin to assault you, ye may look to your record that ye have set down, and be ashamed to misbelieve. It is true, that for a little while our assurance at best will be but ebbing and flowing, but I hope ere long we shall be above the reach of misbelief, and above the reach of fears: I hope ere long, we shall dispute no more, we shall be jealous no more, and we shall question our interest no more, when all our disputings and questionings shall be sweetly drowned in that infinit Ocean of eternal delight and fruition of God. O expectants of heaven, expectants of heaven, are ye not looking after this day? are ye not looking after it? I know not what we do here, if we be not walking forward every day: he is upon his way, he is upon his way. O to see him, we will even stand and wonder at him! I hope the day is coming, when we shall never loose our grips of Christ any more: he is coming, he is coming: and I think if Christ would give a pass, we would long to go hence. O what streets are these that are there! Is there any here who is groaning for heaven? Be of good comfort, I hope ere long he shall come, he shall come, and wash all tears from our eyes.

Now at the last occasion, when we spake upon these words, we told you that there was five or six things which we intended to consider in them. The first was, that such a thing as a distinct and well-grounded perswasion of our interest in Christ was attainable; & of this we have already spoken.

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The second thing is, that concerning this noble and excellent thing assurance, there are many mistakes amongst the people of God, & to make this evident, it is clear first in this text, from that serious and accurate search in this matter, which the Apostle putteth these people unto, as we cleared unto you from the force of the words, & his doubling of these exhortations, *try your own selves, prove your own selves.* 2. From the many commands which the Lord hath left upon record that we should not be mistaken concerning our assurance, 1 Cor. 3. 18. *Let no man deceive himself,* Gal. 6. 3. *If a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself,* and therefore doth the Apostle add. *Let every one prove his own work,* and v. 7. *be not deceived.* 3. The point is clear from this, that we find in Scripture many who have been mistaken most dreadfully in the matter of their assurance, Hof. 8. *Israel cryeth out, my God we know thee,* and yet Israel was in a great mistake: for in the words following vers. 3. *Israel had cast off the thing that was good:* and Prov. 30. 12. we find there, *a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed away from their iniquities.* 4. It is clear from this, that it is a great design of Satan, the great deceiver, that we might be mistaken about that noble and weighty point of our assurance of being in Christ: is there not a power given unto him from Christ to deceive the Nations: I may say, that in no point doth he more prevail to deceive us then in this. *If profanity kill its thousands, illusion kills ten*
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thousands, and this delusion its twenty thousand. Lastly, doth not this prove how much a Christian may be mistaken in the matter of his assurance, even that name which is given to our hearts, Jer. 17. 9. *It is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?* no doubt this may shew us (though there were no more) how ready our hearts are to deceive us, making us to entertain a delusion in stead of truth, and embrace a shadow in stead of substance.

The next thing that we have to speak to upon this point, is to shew you where these mistakes do ly, and what are these false grounds by which so many do deceive their own souls in this matter; and here there are two sorts of persons whom we must inform. 1. There be some who upon most unwarrantable grounds do conclude that their interest in Christ is sure, when indeed it is not. 2. There be some (upon the other hand) who from sad mistakes of themselves and the Lords dealing towards them, deny that they have an interest, when indeed they have. The first sort are the worst, and in the most dangerous condition, and they build upon these six false foundations, which we beseech them to consider.

The first is, their supposed sensible enjoyments. Some Christians in these times especially, do meet with some flashes of light and joy which they have not been (it may be) acquainted with before, or at least, not in such a measure, or in such a sensible manner, and upon this they presently cry, *My beloved is mine, and I am his. I shall not*

not dispute with such about the reality of these enjoyments, or how they come to know that there are such as proceed from a saving work of the Spirit of grace: but waving that debate, give me leave to say this much of all enjoyments and sensible manifestations (as to the point in hand) they may be sometime a good supporter to underprop a Christians assurance when it tottereth, but never a good foundation whereon he may lay the first stone of that building: and therefore he is the wiser Christian who first tryeth the reality of his interest in Christ by other blessed fruits of righteousness and holiness, before he trust the reality of sensible enjoyments, how sweet or comfortable soever they may seem to be. 2. Some build their assurance upon the number & bulk of their duties, without considering the frame of their spirit, & the principle from which they flow; they use prayer & reading, & conference, they wait upon ordinances, and are always there where the mean is thought to be most powerful: & upon this they take up themselves in their own arms, blessing themselves, as that poor man, Luke. 18. *I fast twice a week, I pay tithes of all that I possess*: But alace, they do not consider that they do but build their house upon the sand, which the first blast of temptation vwill overturn, because not onely all our duties vwhen vweighed in the ballance may be found light, but vwhen put to the tryall may be found empty, dead and lifeless things, vwherein the Lords soul can have no pleasure. 3. Some are mistaken in the matter of their assurance, by judging themselves by

- by the Law, not knowing, or not regarding the spiritual meaning thereof: *Paul* was a gallant man (in his own apprehension) when he was without the Law; that is, when he knew not the spiritual meaning of the Law, he thought himself the most eminent Saint in all his Nation: & as he sheweth us, *Phil. 3.* he could compare with any of them; but when the Lord opened his eyes, we see, he put himself last in the roll of Saints, and first in the roll of sinners, *Rom. 7.* *He was alive without the Law*, that is, thought himself living and reigning above his sins; but *when the commandment came*, that is, when it came to his knowledge, and he saw the spirituality of it, *sin revived*, and he *died*, then he saw how that he had triumphed before the victory, he then saw all his sins alive, and as it were, risen from the dead, and himself a dead man, lost and undone in the estate he was in. O how many are there amongst us in *Pauls* first condition, *alive without the Law*? O how many destroy themselves with this, they think there is not a sin forbidden in all the Law of God but only *Ten*? but alas, thou fool, thou erreſt in this, *not knowing the Scriptures*, should thou not judge thy self by that spiritual extent of the meaning of the Law, and that divine commentary which the Apostle *James* hath set forth upon it, wherein he sheweth thee, *That if thou be guilty of the breach of one point, thou art guilty of all*? and by that infallible exposition which Christ himself, the blessed Law-giver hath set down, *Mat. 6.* where by he discovereth adultery in the heart and

in the eye? O Atheist, thou must take up the ten Commands, and subscribe *guilty* to them all: and let me tell you this, if ye will subscribe the law to Christ, he will subscribe the Gospel to you; if thou wilt sincerely say, *I am guilty*; he will as sincerely say, *I have pardoned*; *son or daughter be of good courage, thy sins are forgiven thee.*

Fourthly, Some build their assurance upon the apprehension of their hatred of some particular sin, that albeit it was sometimes as their right hand or their eye, yet now they can pluck it out, or cut it out. But O wilt thou but consider, some sin may be made weak, and the Soul (though not upon a right principle) brought to hate it, and to cry out, *get you hence*, and yet the interest of Satan may be strong in the heart.

The fifth mistake is of many who judge themselves, because they go a greater length than the former, and are kept free from all gross out-breaking sin; how many are there who go sleeping down to hell with this; *I am no drunkard, no adulterer, no murderer, no thief, no whore*; this long have I lived in the Town, and they were never born can say, *I wronged them*: and so they adventure their soul upon this, they never committed any gross sin. But I beseech you, be not deceived, remember how that wretched man did speed, Luke 18. 11. *I am no extortioner, nor adulterer,* nor even as this publican, &c. poor creature that he was, Christ giveth not a Testimonial to every one who take it for themselves; and I must tell some of you, that there may be desperate Atheists without

without God, and without Christ in the World and yet be free of gross outbreacking sins: I do not think, but many of these who crucified the Lord of Glory, were kept from other gross sins. What knowest thou, O man, that there is more favour shewed to thee, in that thou art kept from some gross sins, when yet thou hast a desperately wicked heart, then is shewed to the Devil, when some links of his chain are taken in, & restraining power keeping him in from his utmost bounds. God will sometimes restrain a hypocrite, or a heathen as it was said of *Abimelech*, and *God restrained him*: there may be a cord put upon thy jaws, while thou art far from having the power of conquering grace, It may be also, that all that abstaining from outward outbreakings, proceedeth but from outward disadvantages, and not from any fear of God or respect to him, yea, not so much as from the fear of any eternal punishment: are there not many amongst us, I believe it, there are many that run away from shame, and Church-censure, or civil punishment, and other inconveniencies of that sort, to set a thousand hells before them, they would not be kept back from one sin, but would take the hazard of them all: Yea, is it not want of religion, and nothing else, that hindereth many from gross outbreakings; if Satan would come but as a kindled match, there wanteth no more tongue & hands, and all on fire of hell. O wretched soul, do but ask thy self how often thou hast tempted Satan, when he would not tempt thee, & how often hast thou followed a temptation

it tied from thee ; yea, when the Lord hath hedged up thy ways that thou could not overtake thy lovers , how many a long look hast thou sent after them, and what lustrings of thy spirit within ; and do ye think that heart sins are nothing , although thou had no outbreakings , what were the matter of that ; if thou had not a tongue thou would break the third command , and *curse God in thy heart* , if thou had not an eye, thou could commit adultery *in thy heart*. O therefore build not thy assurance upon this, that thou hast made clean the outside of the platter, when yet all filchiness is within.

The sixth false foundation upon which I am sure too many build their assurance , is their gifts and parts, and especially upon these two, the gift of prayer , and the gift of knowledge : but believe it, it is not much to be a Christian in tongue , but it is much to be a Christian in heart ; know ye not that this will cast out many, *We have prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils*. No doubt these had been excellent flourishers , and if the tongue would have done it , they had been highly advanced ; but yet ye see these men meet with a *depart from me, I know you not*. Ah, think upon it, he is not the best Christian that is the best Orator. Religion that is pure and undefiled, consisteth more in the affection , then in the tongue , and more in practise, then in profession, I beseech you when you cast up your evidences of assurance, consider how well you have done , and not how well ye have spoken.

The seventh false ground whereby many do

misjudge themselves, is, their supposed peace of conscience: O faith one, my conscience doth not charge me with any thing: I thank God, I have a quiet mind, and nothing troubles me; but ah, poor wretch, wilt thou tell me, may not the strong man be within, and therefore all is at peace? a dumb conscience, and a seared conscience, is a dreadful plague. Knowest thou not that many say, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine own heart, and because they say so, the Lord shall not spare them, but all the curses in his Book shall ly upon them.

The eighth false ground, is, the approbation of other Christians, so that if they have the approbation of some such exercised Christians, or if they have the approbation of such a Minister, that is the way to silence all their disputings. O curse be the person that putteth his trust in men who are liars; O man or woman, let me assure you of this, if ye had a Testimonial to present to Christ subscribed with all the hands of every Christian that ever ye were acquainted with, this will be enough for Christ to reject you and it both, *I know you not, and therefore depart from me*. There is an emphasis in that word, *I know you not*, as if I said, it is not much though all others know you, *I know you not*.

The ninth false ground, is their diligent observing all the Ordinances, their going to Preadings, & their going to Communions, and running to and fro, pretending this end, that knowledge may be increased; but know it, there are many that have

sitten down at Table with Christ here, that shall never sit down at the higher Table with him hereafter: Are there not many that shall say unto Christ in the great day, *Have we not eaten and drunken in thy presence*, unto whom Christ shall say, *depart from me, I know you not.*

The tenth false foundation, which is the strong delusion of Atheists, of which no doubt there are many here to day, is the building of their eternal happiness upon this, I never met with a cross, I never knew what it was to have a sad day: but to thee I shal only say, it may be thou never had a joyful day, neither in all thy sinfull pleasures under the Sun; but let me tell thee, it is bad divinity to conclude, therefore I am in the way to Heaven: It may be it were better reasoning, and though I will not say it (yet it cometh nearer truth) I had never a cross, therefore I am going on in the way to Hell: O wilt thou but consider, what if he be heaping coals upon thy head, and *fattning thee to the day of slaughter*? What if this word be your portion, *Eat, drink, and be merry while you are here, for to morrow thou must eternally die*? What are all your pleasures? and what are all your honors? and what are all your possessions? What are they all? are they not a bone cast unto a dog? the Lord valueth them not, What if they be the *fattning of you to the day of slaughter*?

Now as to these who deny they have any interest in Christ, when indeed they have; they commonly deceive themselves, and vex their

own spirits upon some of these or the like mistakes. 1. Some judge of their estate by their present frame and condition, so that if they be in an evil frame, they begin and raze the foundations: and to such I would only say, That every change of condition doth not speak a change of estate; a Child of God may be in much darkness, and under much deadness, and yet a Child of God still, Psal. 73. It was an evil frame to be as a beast before God, and yet even then he keepeth grips, and holdeth him by the right hand: Job was often in a very evil frame, and yet he holdeth fast his integrity; and why then should thou upon that account cast away thine?

Christians judge their estate by dispensations, they think every change of dispensations, speaketh a change of estate, & if Christ do not smile alwayes, we know not what it is to keep up the Faith of our interest; and indeed this is a great fault among Christians, that when they cannot read love in the beautifull face of Christ, they think it is not in his heart. What though he change his dispensation, doth that speak forth a change of thy estate? Christ cannot change his voyce to us, but we think he changeth his heart. Christ cannot speak to us in the whirlwind; but we cry out, Why art thou become unto me as an enemy? Oh, shal precious Christ be thus mistaken?

The third ground of mistake about our interest in Christ, is, that we judge of our estate by what we are in our selves, and not by what we are in Christ. When a Christian beginneth to judge an

Search himself, he can find nothing in himself, but what is the matter of doubting, & therefore thinks it high presumption to think himself a believer: But, O fool, can thou not look to Christ, and cry out, though in my self I be nothing, yet in him I am all: O if Christians knew to judge of themselves be what they are in Christ, and not be what they are in themselves, that with one eye they may look to themselves, and cry out, *I am undone*, and with another look to Christ, & cry out, *There is hope in Israel concerning me*, that with one eye they might look to themselves; and blush, & with another eye they might look unto Christ, & hope: that with one eye they might look to themselves and weep, and with another eye they might look to Christ and rejoyce. O Christian, wilt thou judge alway of thy self be what thou art in Christ, and not be what thou art in thy self; yea, I would say this to thee by the way, when thou meetest with tentations that put thee to disput thy interest, do but send them to Christ to get an answer, and say, O precious Christ, answer this temptation, for this is Christs way with the soul, the Law must bring us back to Christ, and Christ must send us back to the Law, and deliver us over to it, not to the condemning power of it as before, but the directing and guiding power of it, as a rule of holiness; so that a Christians whole life must be a sweet & constant travelling between Christ & the Law: when thou hast broke the Law, flie unto Christ to take away thy guilt, and when thou hast closed with Christ; come running out again in his strength to perform the Law.

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The fourth mistake, is, that Christians judge of their estate by the measure of their graces more nor by the sincerity of them; some Christians, if they find not love in such a degree, and if they find not repentance in such a degree, and mortification in such a degree, immediately they begin and raze the foundations, and do call their enjoyments delusions, and their faith presumption, and their mortification hypocrisy; but I must say this to thee, we should not only weigh our graces in the ballance, but try them also by the touchstone, for the smallest piece of gold is gold, and the least degree of Faith, *is alike precious faith* with that the Apostles themselves had.

The fifth ground of mistakes amongst Christians is this, that they compare themselves more unto the Saints, then they judge of themselves by the word. O faith one, If I were like *David*, I would believe, but I am not like *David*, nor *Jehonah* nor *Hezekiah*; and therefore there is none of the Saints to which I should go, and if I should call, there is none to answer, and why then should I believe? I would only say to thee whose objection that is, it is even *Dauids* objection, *Psal. 22. 5. 6. Our fathers trusted in thee: O they were excellent men, but what a man am I, A worm, and not a man*, and yet he was put from that objection: and I would say this, are ye below him? In what? I hope ye are not below *David* in necessity: Not though ye be below him in grace, if ye be not below him in necessity, ye have so much the more right to believe: for as we said before, necessity gives

giveth you a right, and the more necessity, the greater right to believe.

The sixth ground is, that Christians judge of their estate by Christs part of the covenant, and not by their own, rather examining themselves by vvhhat Christ hath promised to do for them, then by vvhhat is left to them to do, vvhich thing if it vvere heeded, vvhould put a close to many of our mistakes and disputings.

Having now laid out some mistakes upon either hand, the next vve vvhould do, is to propose some considerations to press you to guard against these mistakes, especially the first.

And the first consideration is, that mistakes about ones interest in Christ, and assurance, is a most universal and popular evil: it is not one of a city, nor two of a family, but many are mistaken in their interest in Christ; that word, *Prov. 30. 12.* *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not cleansed from their iniquity*, it is not one or two that are under this mistake, but it is a generation: and I suppose there are many of us, we are of this tribe and generation, *Matth 7. 22.* He saith, *many in that day shal say unto me Lord, Lord, and have we not prophesied, and yet he shal say unto them, I know you not*: Since it is so universal a mistake, I intreat you, be much in the search of your selves, search your own selves; certainly I think, if there vvere but vvithin this Church one that vvere under this mistake, it should put us all to this, *Master, is it I? Master, is it I?* but how much more since there is a generatiō of mistakers should it not be our exercise every day to cry out,

The second consideration is, That as it is most universal, so also it is a most irrecoverable mistake; if ye mistake about this your being in Christ, there is no making up of that mistake; once ye pass the borders of Time with this lie in your right hand, I am in Christ, There is no hope of recovery, eternity will cut off access to make up that mistake; I intreat you, go not down to your grave with this, I am in Christ, when yet Christ may say, I know you not: I believe it, if ye could have a testimonial subscribed by the hands of all the most eminent and tender Christians that ye have known, that ye are indeed a Saint, and if all the Ministers that ever ye spoke to should praise you in the gate, and declare you to be a Son and a Daughter of *Abraham*; yet when ye shall bring up your testimonial to Heaven, and the Father shal read it, and shal ask you, where is my Sons Name? if that be not there, it will certainly be rejected, and cast over the bar.

Thirdly, It is a soul-destroying delusion, this mistake about ones interest in Christ, is the very ruine of their immortal soul, according to that word, *Isai. 44. 20. A deceived heart hath led him aside*, and what is the fruits of it, so that he cannot deliver his soul, and by consequence it may be said, that they destroy their soul: I believe it, there are many that go to hell in a chariot of delusions; we know some Christ guideth to Heaven by the gates of hell, and letteth them not see life till they be in sight of hell, but it is true also, there are others whom the Devil guideth to Hell, by the

very borders of Heaven, he maketh them believe they are dwelling in the gate of Heaven all their days, and yet at last they are thrust down to these habitations that are prepared for the Devil and his angels.

Fourthly, if once a person be mistaken about their interest in Christ, they will have these three noble disadvantages attending upon them. 1. As long as he is under this mistake, he is without all reach of profiting by the Ordinances; for when he heareth preaching, he will apply promises, when he should apply threatnings; and upon the other hand, apply threatnings, when he should apply promises: and so that which should be his medicine, becometh poyson to him. 2. As long as he is under this mistake, it maketh him that he cannot pity nor have compassion upon himself, that though he be the most suitable object of compassion, yet he knows not what is to weep over his own ruine. 3. Readily all his graces are but delusions, all his good motions are but flashes, and all his mortification counterfeited, and all his tenderness is but the mother of stupidity, and therefore guard against mistakes about your interest in Christ, I intreat you.

Fifthly, consider that mistakes about ones interest, is a most abiding and constant mistake, believe it, if once we mistake in this, it is one to a hundred if ever we come right again: this is clear, Jer. 8. 5. *They hold fast deceit, they keep it with both their hands:* and Isai. 44. 20. *There is a lie in their right hand, that is, they hold the lie, and they keep it with all their power; I say, if once one be mi-*
take

staken concerning their interest in Christ, it is hard to put them from it, yea, delusion it is such an abiding thing, that we find Christ speaketh it as if it would vvaite upon one before the judgement seat of Christ, and as if some would never quite their hopes of heaven, till Christ pronounce that word, *Depart from me, I know you not*: delusion may carry us over the borders of time, and lead us in to Eternity.

Sixthly, there is much counterfeit Religion that is in these days, there is a painted faith, there is a painted love, there is a painted mortification, and there is a painted tenderness: some they love shadows and pictures, and yet they do not love the very shadow of Christ, and are there not many who think they are embracing Christ, and yet are embracing a delusion and a fancy?

That which thirdly, we would speak to from this point, is, to give you some evidences by which ye may know if the assurance ye have of your being in Christ, be right or no: Believe it, there are many that draw that conclusion, *I am in Christ*, which the Devil and their own deceitfull hearts hath drawn, and Christ never gave consent unto it: And I shall propose these seven or eight evidences of real assurance, by which we may discern.

First, a real assurance is a purifying and sanctifying assurance, this is clear, 1 John 3. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him, that is, perswaded of this that he shall come to heaven, He will purify himself as he is pure*: And 2 Corin. 7. 1. *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse*

our selves from all filthineſſ of the fleſh , and of the ſpirit. O! vvhen a Chriſtian getteth Chriſt in his arms , he cannot but cry forth , *what haue I to do any more with Idols ?* When he hath once gotten Chriſt in his arms, he will anſwer every temptation that he meeteth with this , *I am not mine own , I am bought with a price ,* I cannot now diſpoſe of my ſelt : and if your aſſurance of going to Heaven be not a purifying aſſurance, be perſwaded of it, it is but the devils pillow ſowed under your arm holes. Is it poſſible a perſon can be aſſured of Heaven, and not ſtudy holineſſ ? can ſuch a deluſion as this overtake you ?

Secondly, a real aſſurance putteth the Chriſtian to a preſſing and earneſt purſuit after communion and fellowſhip with God : it is impoſſible for one to be aſſured , and not to be ſaying he is ſick of love : this is clear, Song 2. 16. 17. *My beloved is mine , and I am his :* and immediatly followeth, *Turn thee, O my beloved, and be like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether :* And it is clear, Song 7. 10. 11. *I am my beloveds, and his deſire is towards me :* and what followeth upon that ? She cometh and inviteth Chriſt, *O come down with me to the fields, let us lodge in the villages.* O when gave ye Chriſt ſuch an invitation as this, O precious Chriſt, let us lodge in the villages, and go down to the ſecret places of the field : And Pſal. 63. 1. *My God , there is his aſſurance :* and immediatly followeth upon that, *Early will I ſeek thee , my ſoul thiſteth after thee , as in dry parched land where no water is.* There is a preſſing deſire after communion. But I would as you , are there

not many here who have the hope of heaven (their apprehension) and yet the desire of communion with Christ was never with them? I desire to say to thee, (be who thou wilt) *be not deceived, God is not mocked; that which thou sowest, thou shalt also reap.* I think there are some of us, who would let Christ live in heaven many days, without giving him one visite, if he would let us alone. But, O if we were within sight of our interest in Christ, how often would this be our complaint when he were absent, *They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him;* or my idol hath carried me away from him, and know not where to find him.

Thirdly, Assurance of our being in Christ, will put us to the exercise of praise; believe it, I think this one of the most searching evidences of assurance: There are some Christians, they will be convinced for the neglect of the duty of prayer, but for the neglect of the duty of praise, they never have one conviction; and I tell you the reason of it, prayer is a selfish grace, (so to speak) but praise is a denying grace, prayer seeketh, but praise giveth, *Exod. 15.2. He is my God, I will prepare him a habitation; and he is my fathers God, I will exalt him. Psalm 118. 28. He is my God, I will praise him, he is my God, I will exalt him:* What needeth David these repetitions, might not one suffice? No, saith he, I would even spend my day in this, *My God, my God:* there is much of heaven in that word, *My God*, and love committeth many sweet batologies: Now I say to thee, when thou ever put to the heart-exercise of praise,

This assurance that thou hast, this is an evidence indeed: but alace, many of us cannot say it.

Fourthly, A person that liveth within sight of his interest, Christ is matchless unto him: as is clear, Song 2. 3. *I sat down under his shadow, there is faith and assurance of it, and what accompanieth that? As the Apple-tree amongst the trees of the wood, so is my beloved amongst the sons: Christ hath not a match, saith the Spouse, in his sweetness, his power, his beauty; and his usefulness is above all.*

Fifthly, Real assurance is a humbling thing, the assurance of a Christian maketh him to sit low in the dust: Was not Jacob low in his own eyes, when he cryed out, *I am less then the least of thy mercies*; What? Was not David low in his own eyes, when he spake that word, *What am I, and what is my Fathers house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* and was not Paul a low man in his own eyes, Ephes. 3. 8. 16. *I am less then the least of all thy Saints*, and when he cryed out, *I am the chief of sinners*: The assurance that is real, it will make a Christian to sit down in the dust, and cry out, *Who is me, I am a man of polluted lips.*

Sixthly, Real assurance will put him to take much pleasure & delight in the going about of duties: that word, Ps 40. 8. *My God, saith he, that is his assurance, and presently he subjoyneth, I delight to do thy will, O Lord*, this he speaketh of himself, as himself, and likewise as a type of Christ, Psalm 119. 115. *Depart from me evil doers, for I will keep the Commandments of my*

God ; I believe it , the love of Christ when much in exercise, it will constrain us to our duty and therefore this proud transporting assurance these days , that setteth men above all duties and Ordinances, & maketh them count the Gospel well as the Law, but *beggerly rundiments*, and out to their neighbors , *Stand aback, for I am holier then thou* must needs be a delusion.

Lastly , There are these three properties of real assurance, it is a begotten assurance , it is a living assurance , and it is a constraining assurance. The first two properties of it are set down in the 2 Pet. 1. 2. *He hath begotten us to a lively hope*. Who begat that assurance in thee? I suppose some have assurance, and it was begotten without travel but if Christ be not the Father of thy assurance, it will evanish and pass away. And, secondly, it must be a living assurance ; some hearts are dead as stone, and yet they say they have the hope of heaven. And thirdly, it must be a constraining assurance , it will put the Christian to do what he commands, yea, if it were the most pleasant I have that we have , if he command us to sacrifice it, we would put a knife to the throat of it , and be willing to offer it up.

Now after all these evidences , I desire to have a report from you concerning your estate : What think ye of your selves, are ye in Christ, or not? I suppose , if Christ should come here to day, and put us all to the door but these that are in Christ we would have a thin assembly : I confess, I wonder that that word doth not make us to walk with sadness , *Many are called, but few are chosen*

Now I ask this question at you all, as in the sight of God, and as ye will one day answer unto him that will be your Judge, what think ye of your selves? Is there none here that can give a present positive answer to this, *Are ye in Christ?* I suppose this, if I were to go round them that are here, and ask, are ye in Christ, are ye, and ye in Christ? O! I doubt much if there should be many negative answers within the doors: we have so strong a faith some of us, that since we were born, we never doubted of it; But I think (without commending doubting) I may say, the faith that thou never doubted of, is too like a delusion, and the faith that thou never took pains to keep, and yet it kepted it self, that is too like a delusion: the faith that never knew what it was to put thee to real seeking of Christ, is too like a delusion. But let me close with this, be your estate what it will, search and come away; I think that is one of the most Gospel invitations that is in all the Scripture, Lam. 3. 34. *Let us search and try our wayes, and turn again unto the Lord:* when thou hast searched, come away, for I tell thee this, there will be nothing that will commend thee to Christ so much as necessity, and I hope there is none of you, but you have enough of this: and know it, if ye will not come to Christ, he will compel you to come; but it shal not be for your advantage to stay away till ye be compelled. O persons that are out of Christ, *Come away:* O persons that are in Christ, *Come away:* we must preach that word, *come away*, unto you as long as ye

ye are here, till ye come and be fixed as a pillar in the House of God, and go no more out, O Runners to be near him: O Christian, didst thou ever think upon this, and say with thy self, O when shall I have immediate imbraces of blessed Christ? When shall there be nothing between my heart and him? till then, we never get Christ near enough, there is alway something between him and us, till we be above the clouds. O these immediate soul-infoldings & imbracings of Christ. Are ye never sending a messenger to Heaven desiring a pass to go away that ye may enjoy them, and are ye not longing for the day, when the waters of Jordan shall divide themselves, and the raiment of the Lord shall pass thorow? Now let us sing, sing praises to our King, sing praises, for he hath gone up with a shout, and shall come again, sing praises to our King, sing praises.

S E R M O N I X.

2 Cor. 13 5. *Examine your selves, whether ye be in the faith? prove your own selves, know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

I Think ere long, there are many that passed under the notion of professors, that the verie Atheist when he beholdeth their walk, may cry out, *Art thou also become like unto one of many?* Are there not many here that are in a golden dream?

dream, and in a fools paradise, that dream they eat, and behold when they awake, they shall be hungry; therefore I think it is incumbent upon us to search and examine our state and condition; profanity hath slain its thousands, but delusion and presumption hath slain their ten thousands, it was an ancient complaint of Christ, Luke 12. 57. *And why even of our selves judge ye not what is right*; I am perswaded of this, there are many decreets of peace past upon Earth, that are never ratified in Heaven: there are many that cry out, *The bitterness of death is past*, whom yet God by the sword of his justice shall hew in pieces before our eyes. We told you at the last occasion, that we spake upon these words, there were six things we intended to speak from them: of the first three we have spoken.

That which we intend to speak to at this time, is, That there is much soul-advantage and spiritual gain, that doth redound to the Christian by the distinct perswasion of his interest in Christ; this we gathered from *Pauls* doubling the command of leaching and trying themselves, as if he had said, it is a business that will be so much for your advantage, that it is incumbent for you to search and try diligently: And for further clearing of the point; I shall only give these three places, Rev. 2. 17. *I will give unto them a white stone, and in the stone a new name written that no man knoweth, but he that hath received it*: By the new name, and the white stone, is understood assurance, and the intimation of it to the Soul: This indeed is such

such a mercy, that I defy any to make language
 it, no man knoweth it, much less can he express it,
 but he that is the possessor of it, and that place
Isai. 62. 2. 3. I will give unto them a new name
which the mouth of the Lord will name: O what
 name must that be which the mouth of the Lord
 will name: I think, what he giveth, must be one
 of the noblest names that ever was given, all the
 styles and titles under Heaven cannot equal it.
 And thirdly, we see *David* in the *18. Psal.* found
 much sweetness and advantage in this, when nine
 times he hath that word, *my: My strength, my*
rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my strength
and my buckler, the horn of my salvation, and my
high tower. O *David*, what needeth all these
My's? *David* would answer thus, O! he is so sweet
 in himself, but O! much sweeter to me, when I
 put to that positive note, *My.*

Now to speak more particularly to these advance-
 ments of assurance, The first is, that a person that
 is assured of his interest in Christ, he is much in
 desiring communion with Christ: *Tell me, O thou*
whom my soul loveth, (there is his assurance) where
thou feedest, and where thou makest thy flock to rest
at noon, there is desire of communion: and *Song*
7 10. 11. My beloved is mine, and his desire is to-
wards me, there is her assurance, and immediately
 followeth, *Come my beloved, let us go forth unto*
the fields, let us lodge in the villages, there her
 desire of communion, *Song 2. 16. 17. My belo-*
ved is mine, and I am his, and what followeth
 upon

upon that? He feedeth among the lillies untill the
 day break, and the shadows flie away: Turn my be-
 loved, and be as a Roe or a wild Hart upon the
 mountains of Bether: that is in short, let me have
 sweet correspondency and fellowship with thee
 till the day of eternity shal come. I think the de-
 sires of an assured Christian, they are like the
 grave, they cry continually, Give, give, and they
 never say, it is enough: What is the reason ye
 seek so little after fellowship with Christ? it is
 even this, ye are not perswaded of your interest in
 him: believe it, if once ye had attained to this
 blest length, as to cry out, *Christ is mine*, it would
 be a hell upon earth for you to live at such a di-
 stance with him as ye do, for the most part: O but
 assurance maketh abience from Christ an unsup-
 portable burden, Psalm 22. 1. *My God, my God,*
 there is assurance, and immediatly followeth his
 complaint, *Why hidest thou thy self from me*. Song
 2. 1. 2. 3. that word, *Him whom my soul loveth*,
 made her to weep so much under absence from
 Christ, and John 20. 13. when the Angels ask
 the question at Mary, *Woman, why weepest thou?*
 I think she thought it a needless question, and she
 tells them the cause of it, *They have taken away my*
Lord; I think her heart was at her mouth when
 she pronounced these two words, *My Lord*, she
 spake them with a great deal of emphasis and
 force, could ye resent absence with Christ so lit-
 tle, if ye were assured he were yours? I confesse
 it is no wonder when persons lose that which is
 not

not their own, that they weep not much for loss of it, but O ! to loss that which is our own maketh it a cross and a burden to us.

Secondly, It maketh the soul to have a high matchless esteem of precious Christ, Song 5. *My beloved is white and ruddy, the chief amongst thousand:* O saith the Spouse, I never saw his like and I shal never see his like again : there is much interest in that My; interest makech her look upon Christ with another eye nor she would have done, strangers look upon him but as a tree planted on sand, 1 Pet. 2. 7. *To you that believe, Christ is precious,* not to every one ; and Song 2. 2. *I sat down under his shadow with great delight,* the reason of interest in the words going before, *As the apple tree amongst the trees of the wood, so is my beloved amongst the sons ;* yea, assurance will make everything in Christ exceeding pleasant to a soul : as clear, Song 4. 16. *My beloved is altogether lovely for, he is all desires.* I tell you what assurance will do, it will make Christs person pleasant and precious to the Soul, it will make Christs Nature pleasant to the Soul, it will make Christs Office pleasant to the Soul. it will make Christs promises pleasant to the Soul, it will make Threatnings pleasant to the Soul, it will make the smell of Christs garments pleasant to the Soul, and it will make the kisses of his mouth pleasant unto the soul : O saith the assured Christian, there is nothing of Christ but it is most pleasant, and is all desires ; his threatnings are pleasant, they

the wounds of a friend, and his kisses are pleasant, they are better then wine, his Name it is pleasant, is a precious ointment powred forth, his smellings are most delightfome, *Whose countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars*: O to imbrace a married Christ, how pleatant is it to the soul; What maketh you to have so low thoughts of Christ? even this, the want of assurance that he is your husband.

Thirdly, Assurance will make the Christian patiently to submit to every cross and sad dispensation that he meeteth with: this is clear, Heb. 10. 34. *They took with joy the spoiling of their goods; and what made them do so? They hoped for a better inheritance, and a more induring substance*; I tell you, assurance it will answer all crosses with this, *Christ is mine*, when they are afflicted, assurance will lift up its face, and cry out, *Christ is mine*, and when they are reproached, they will comfort themselves with this, *Christ is mine, I can put on the Lord Jesus*.

Fourthly, Assurance will keep you from Apostacy and defection from Christ, 2 Pet. 1. 10. *Make your calling and election sure, and if ye do this, (saith he) ye shal never fall*. Heb. 3. 11. 12. It is there set down as a fruit of the evil heart of unbelief, it makes us depart from the living God: but on the contrary, assurance knitterh the Soul to Christ by a threefold cord, which is not easily broken: Believe it, the assured Christian can cry out with much confidence of faith, *My mountain stand-*

standeth strong, I shal never be moved; the assured Christian can cry out with much chearfulness, *God will I praise his word, in God have I put my trust, I will not be afraid what flesh can do unto me, yea he can sweetly sing in the very mouth of danger, The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shal I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, whom shal I be afraid?* Psalm 27. 1.

Fitchly, Assurance keepeth all the graces of the spirit green and flourishing, it is as a refreshing dew upon our branches, which maketh every grace sweetly to blossom in its season. 1. It stirreth up the exercise of love: O how vigorous are the workings of love; when a Christian can cry out, *I am beloved of mine, and I am his*, Song 1. 13. My beloved, there is her assurance, *He is a bundle of myrrhe, and shall ly all night between my breasts*, that is, as long as time shal last, I shal never have Christ out of my heart, there is love, 1 John 19. *We loved him, because he loved us first*; our hearts are naturally cold, but love kindleth love, the sense of his love to us putteth our hearts in a heavenly flame towards him again. 2. Assurance keeps up the exercise of prayer, it is the assured Christian that can pray best, and to most advantage, and in these three things especially is prayer helped by assurance: First, It helpeth in the point of boldness. O but the assured Christian can boldly to the Throne of Grace, crying *Abba Father, and my Lord, and my God*. Secondly, it helpeth our diligence in prayer, Psal. 63. 1. O

God, there is assurance, *early will I seek thee*, there is his diligence as the fruit thereof. Thirdly, It helpeth the fervency of prayer, as in that same place, *My soul thirsteth for thee, and my flesh longeth for thee*, there is his fervency as another fruit of his assurance. 3. Assurance keepeth in exercise and life; the grace of mortification: as is clear by comparing, 2. Cor. 4. v. last, 2. Cor. 5, 1. *We look not after the things that are seen: O Paul, what aileth you, may ye not take a look of the world, O saith Paul, and would you know the ground of it, We know if this house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens: my house and my treasure is in the heaven, I must have my heart there, and my eyes also: Would ye know what would stay your pursuit after the world, study to have the assurance of your interest in Christ continually with you. And 4. it keepeth in exercise the grace of humility; here is nothing will keep Christians so humble as assurance, Gal. 2, 20. *I live yet not I, But Christ liveth in me*, Eph. 3. 8. there he is all in exalting grace and debasing himself: It is the misbeliever discouraged person that dwelleth nearest pride; believe it, misbeliefs big with child of pride and apostacy, these are the two children, which that fruitful mother will bring forth. And, 5. it will help the grace of repentance: Would ye know what would make the Christian to repent, it is even this, to take Christ in our arms and call him ours, Zech. 12, 10. *They shall look unto him*, that*

is there faith; and they shall mourn as on mourning for his only son: I think it is known by experience the soul never weeps more tenderly under the conviction of sin, then when he hath Christ in his arms, and I can say, *He is mine*: O how sweet doth they then complain, there is not a sight of Christ as their own, when they have offended, but it breaks all their heart in pieces, and it is as a sword piercing into the bones, when they cry out, O what a fool was I to offend such a precious One, in whom I had so much interest? Was it not sense of interest that made Mary wash the feet of Christ with her tears? Lastly, it will keep in exercise the grace of joy, 1. Pet. 1.8. It is faith which maketh one to *rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory*: Would ye know why your graces are withered? Would ye know why all the pleasant plants of God within your soul are decayed? it is this, ye live without sight of your interest in Christ: believe it (if so I may speak) assurance will be a watering to your graces every morning and refresh them every hour, it being as a channel through which divine influence is conveyed to the increase of grace, and especially of joy.

The sixth advantage that cometh in to the Christian by assurance of his interest in Christ, That it maketh death exceeding pleasant and comfortable to the soul; What maketh death the *King of terrors*, and what maketh it so unto the assured Christian can take death in his arms

and cry out, welcome: O friend: the assured Christian, when he seeth the chariots his father sends for him, doth with old Jacob rejoyce, and *Psalm 23. When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: what brought you that length, David? I tell you why, saith he, for God is with me, v. 4. I think I need not fear any thing, when I have God in my company: It is the assured Christian that can cry out, Why should I fear death? should I not laugh at destruction? I think indeed, the assured Christian needeth not fear death, because death to him is the death of all his lusts, the funeral of all his sorrows: and is not the day of death his coronation day, his marriage day the day of his triumph and of his entering into rest, and why then should he fear it? The seventh advantage is, that a Christian being in the state of assurance, can put the highest account upon the smallest mercy that he meets with from God: the assured Christian looketh upon every mercy, as a wonder; it is the assured Christian that cryeth out, *I am less then the least of all thy mercies*: there is not a mercy he meets with, were it but a drop of cold water, but if he can read this on it that it came from my husband, and from my father, it will be better to him then the sweetest wine.*

Lastly, Assurance doth exceedingly help us to cheerfulness in obedience, O that is a remarkable connexion that Paul hath, *Act. 27. 23. The Lord whose I am, and whom I serve*: That passage

2. Cor. 5. 14. is very observable, The love of Christ constraineth us, &c. Why art thou so pious a Minister Paul? Why? knowest thou not that after the flesh, are not led by carnal interests, affections; are so busie and diligent, as all the world counteth the mad? Why? (saith Paul) love will not let me rest, if I would be lazie carnal, or fold my hands to sleep: the love of Christ doth always sound that in my ears, that he was dead, and he hath died for me, that henceforth I should not live unto my self, but to him who died for me: Now to him who is the first, the last, who was dead, and is alive for ever. We give praise.

FINIS.

